

СЕРГЕЙ
КРЕМЛЁВ

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Abstract

Autumn 1941. Guderian is not near Moscow, but in Suez ...

Spring 1942. Rokossovsky is not near Kharkov, but in Delhi ...

Summer 1942. Undercover Red Army paratroopers

Luftwaffe landing in Britain...

Was it possible? The famous historian Sergei Kremler answers: "Yes!" If Hitler had not attacked the USSR, if he had remained faithful to the Soviet-German Pact, then in the summer of 1942, in alliance with Stalin, he could have won World War II. Imagine: Germany is crushing

the British in North Africa, Russia is helping Indian nationalists throw off the British yoke, the Soviet "flying fortresses" Pe-8, together with the German Dornier, are destroying the main base of the English fleet in Scapa Flow. America's plans for world domination are shattered...

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Sergei Kremlev

If Hitler had not attacked the USSR...

MEMORY UNTIMELY
OF GONE FRIENDS: RUSSIAN SERGEI
GLADNEV AND RUSSIAN GERMAN VALERY
EDIGER

*The West is the West,
the East is the East, And
together they cannot come together...*

(Poet Rudyard Kipling)

***Why should we consider that the scientific
method, created for the analysis of inanimate nature,
can be transferred to historical thinking, which
involves the consideration of people in the course of
their activity? .. The historian's seminar is a nursery
in which living
learn to speak a living word about the living.***

(Historian Arnold Toynbee)

***I believe that you, like Hitler in your time, are
making a mistake, because I am convinced that the
only and main enemy of Russia and Germany is
American capitalism ... The war between Russia and
Germany is a mistaken war. A truly just war must be
directed against American capitalism. The most
correct idea was that the Soviet Union and***

Germany opposed Anglo-Saxon imperialism. In this case, the power of the Anglo-Saxon civilization in the world today would be over, and Russia and Germany would only benefit from this ...

(Ideologist of European nationalism Jean Thiriart in a conversation with Yegor Ligachev, ex-member of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPSU, in 1992)

The historian who blindly follows documents is as pathetic as the historical novelist who frivolously disregards them.

(Author's conviction)

Introduction with an excursion into the real past

The reader who expects to see in my book only a famously twisted "alternative", I hope, will not be deceived in his expectations. I will try to make my story interesting enough. Nevertheless, the author must admit that he strives for entertainment not as an end in itself, but only as a means to understand serious things, without dislocating either his own cheekbones or the cheekbones of a respected reader from yawning. And this book gives not an adventurous, but a historically quite possible, although not realized, version of the events of 1941 and 1942. In reality, in the decisive year of the 20th century - 1941 - the European political situation was **formed** in such a way that things were moving not towards a lasting European peace, but towards the Great War. However, an analysis of the very real history and its documents convinces us that, with a certain turn of events, the entire subsequent course of world history could be different - in contrast to what it turned out to be after the real June 22, 1941. Such a turning point could be a personal meeting between the two leaders of the two

great powers - Russia and Germany. It could change the nature of relations between the two peoples in the direction of cooperation in the name of counteracting Anglo-Saxon globalism. And, therefore, for the benefit of a more reasonable and just world around the world. "The war of the Germans with the Russians might not have happened!" — such is the

"theorem" I propose. And I was convinced of the need for such a "virtual" analysis of that era by acquaintance with quite reliable and real documents. Well, for example...

How often "historians"-academicians gave us the first lines the famous plan "Barbarossa", which begins like this:

"The German armed forces must be ready to defeat Soviet Russia in the course of a short

campaign before the end of the war against England. (Option "Barbarossa") ... "

But how many people are familiar with this plan, approved by Hitler on December 18, 1940, in full? But in this top secret directive No. 21 (Barbarossa plan, machine No. 33408/40, 9 copies printed), the first paragraph of section IV proves that the plan for the invasion of Russia was only conjectural when it was **approved** . Here is the paragraph:

IV. All orders that will be given by the commanders-in-chief on the basis of this directive must absolutely definitely proceed from the fact that **we are talking about precautionary measures in case Russia changes its current position towards us** (the emphasis here and below is mine. - **S.K.**)".

A month and a half has passed, the operational department of the General Staff of the Wehrmacht ground forces issues on January 31, 1941, an updated "Directive on the concentration of troops" (plan "Barbarossa", machine No. 050/41 - command document, Soviet secret, 30

copies printed). And its first section again confirms the absence of a hard intention of Germany at that time to start a war with the USSR:

"1. General tasks. In the event **that Russia changes its current attitude towards Germany**, as a precautionary measure, extensive preparatory measures should be taken that would make it possible to defeat Soviet Russia in a fleeting campaign even before the war against England is over ... "

The ideas of "Suvorov"-Rezun are absolutely alien to me, and I understand and know that by the beginning of the war Russia had not changed its attitude towards Germany, but the "fast-moving campaign" nevertheless began. However, I cannot fail to notice that the above-cited documents date back to the time before the Soviet Union approved the anti-German coup in Yugoslavia on March 27, 1941. And - until the conclusion of the S

The alliance on April 5, 1941, with the anti-German and pro-British Yugoslav government that came to power as a result of this coup inspired in London.

On April 28, 1941, Hitler, in a conversation with the Moscow ambassador of the Reich, Count von der Schulenburg, asked: "What the hell pulled the Russians to conclude a friendship pact with Yugoslavia?" If you know the whole situation in Europe at that time, then no other question can be asked about our hasty "friendship" with Belgrade. We behaved stupidly that spring, stupidly ... And such steps of the USSR, as a pact with Yugoslavia-Serbia, doomed to the slaughter by the Britons, made the Barbarossa plan more and more logical for the Fuhrer. And now he acted irrationally - to the point that now **the devil pulled** him to go to Moscow in the summer of 1941. What if he didn't go for it?

DEFINITELY, Stalin was not going to fight Germany in 1941. And in 1942, when

would the rearmament of the Red Army be completed? And in 1943, when the United States would have attacked Germany, "having sewn the last button to the uniform of the last soldier," and England? After all, it was the Yankees who incited the Britons to war with the Germans, and then "caringly" nurtured this war, encouraging the Britons in their anti-Germanism. While still formally neutral, the United States actually fought on the side of England almost from 1939. And no later than 1943, the Yankees would again - like a quarter of a century before - come to Europe to defeat the Germans. What would Stalin have done then? Most likely, Stalin in this case

would have preferred to remain on the sidelines. However, Hitler had serious objective reasons to doubt Stalin's future loyalty to **his** Germany. And Hitler reported his doubts in real time, for example, during a meeting at the Headquarters of the Wehrmacht on January 9, 1941. He spoke about this later and publicly - in a note from the USSR on the declaration of war and in a radio address to the nation on June 22, 1941.

An indicative detail is that the text of the note and the memorandum to it are not even in the last, XXIII volume of the multi-volume publication Documents of the Foreign Policy of the USSR, officially published by the Russian Foreign Ministry. The first volumes were published in the 1970s. And Volume XXIII, titled "Foreign Policy Documents" ("USSR" strangely dropped out of the titles – **S.K. J.** 1940 - June 22, 1941" (book 2, parts 1 and 2) was

published in 1998. The annotation to the last volume of the DVP says that the publication of documents from that time is "important for establishing the historical truth." However, to establish the truth, it is simply necessary to know those key documents that I mentioned. Alas, volume XXIII ends with the text of V. M. Molotov's radio speech on June 22, 1941. And the text of Hitler's speech - no! There are no directives from the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Reich Ribbentrop to the Ambassador in Moscow Schulenburg and a

memorandum on the reasons for declaring war either! Why? Yes, because there, in full accordance with the historical truth, it is said that, despite

the loyal steps on the part of Germany: - the concession of Lithuania to the Soviet sphere of influence; - support in the issue of the return of Bessarabia and the inclusion of Northern Bukovina (which never belonged to Russia) into the USSR; - restraint when returning the Baltic states to the USSR; - supporting us against the Finns

during the Soviet-Finnish war, the USSR unreasonably tried to expand its activity and influence in the Balkans (which created Hitler's concern about Romanian oil); together with England (although without coordination with it), he actually encouraged an anti-German coup in Yugoslavia and immediately concluded a pact with the Yugoslavs, surprisingly unnecessary for Russia.

The main thing is that the USSR gave England reason to hope for some favorable (and unfavorable for the Reich) turn in Soviet-German relations. And these hopes supported England in her unwillingness to end the war in Europe with an honorable peace for both sides.

This is what Hitler accused us of in June of the real year 1941. And, sadly, it must be admitted that Hitler's claims to the Soviet Union were, in fact, justified ... I emphasize - the claims, and not the method that he chose on June **22** of the real 1941 to satisfy them.

IN THE MENTIONED XXIII volume of "DVP" in book 2, part 1, there are official records of Molotov's Berlin conversations with Hitler, Ribbentrop, Goering in November 1940. Getting acquainted with them, you understand why these transcripts were hidden for so long - in them we find by no means a possessed Fuhrer. So, on November 12, 1940, in the first conversation, Hitler said far-sighted and true things to Molotov! Here is the Russian entry by translators V. Pavlov and V. Bogdanov (p. 44):

“The US is pursuing a purely imperialist policy. The US is not fighting for England, but trying to seize her inheritance. In this war, the United States helps England only insofar as they create armaments for themselves and try to win the place in the world position to which they aspire. He (Hitler. - **S.K.**) thinks that it would be good to establish the solidarity of those countries that are connected by common interests. This is not a problem for 1940, but for 1970 or 2000.”

There is also a German recording by the translator Hitler Schmidt ... In it, the words of the Fuhrer look a little different:

“At present, the US is pursuing an imperialist policy. They are not fighting for England, but only trying to take over the British Empire. They help England, at best, in order to continue their own rearmament and, by acquiring bases, to strengthen their military power. To be decided in the distant future

the question of close cooperation between those countries whose interests will be affected by the expansion of the sphere of influence of this Anglo-Saxon power, which stands on a foundation much stronger than England. However, this is not an issue to be resolved in the near future; not in 1945, but only in 1970 or 1980, at the earliest, this Anglo-Saxon power will threaten the freedom of other nations.”

To restore Hitler's thought completely, it is obviously necessary to combine both records. But either way is amazing! Today, in the 2000s of the new century, Hitler's prediction has fully come true, and the United States threatens the freedom of all the peoples of the world! The following words, spoken by Hitler to Molotov during their second meeting, are also striking (DVP, v. 2, part 1, p. 65):

"I believe that our successes will be greater if we stand back to back and fight against the outside world than if we stand chest to shoulder against each other and fight against each other."

And how should one evaluate the next statement of the Fuhrer? It was done at the same time:

“If there is mutual recognition of future development, it will be in the interests of both peoples. This, perhaps, will require a lot of work and strain of nerves, but in the future both peoples will develop, however, without becoming one single world, since the German will never become Russian, and the Russian - German. Our task is to ensure this peaceful development.”

It is usually argued that Hitler was cunning with Stalin and Molotov - he spoke about cooperation, while he himself was preparing a blow. But not everything is so simple! Here in Hitler's conversations with Western leaders, yes, craftiness is often felt, especially when Hitler denigrates Russia. There he "served a number" and got off on duty

anti-Soviet phrases. And in a conversation with Molotov, the intonations are sincere. At

the same time, Hitler offered the USSR to openly join the Pact of Three (Germany, Italy and Japan) against the Anglo-Saxons. Our transcript of the conversation says:

"He, Hitler, invites the Soviet Union to participate as the fourth partner in this Pact."

Hitler said:

"Perhaps such forces will revive in Asia that will exclude the possibility of colonial possessions for European states ..."

And this does not fit well with the image of a "maniac rushing to the world domination."

Under the "new world order" Hitler understood such a world when the Anglo-Saxons and the French would have to make room and give a place at the world "table" to all countries. And what order did those who wrote the words on the US one dollar bill have in mind:

"Novus ordo seclorum" ("New order for the ages")?

Alas, Molotov, a man without his own ideas, did not catch the Fuhrer's ideas. And Stalin in real history did not have time to look Hitler in the eye and respond with a look of understanding that excludes a future war between Russians and Germans, and hence globalization and the dictates of the Golden Elite by the beginning of the 21st century.

As a result, Hitler's mutual distrust of Russia and Stalin's of Hitler grew. One of the reasons for Hitler's distrust was the activity in 1940-1941 of the Moscow ambassador of England, a convinced Germanophobic Cripps. Moreover, Maisky, our plenipotentiary representative in London, did not act like a friend of Germany, although that power was officially friendly to Russia, and at the same time was at war with Maisky's host country, which was not at all friendly to Russia. Not without reason, in his speech on June 22, 1941, Hitler stated:

"Britain still hoped to form a European anti-German coalition, which was supposed to include the Balkans and Soviet Russia ... Therefore, in London they decided to send Mr. Cripps as an ambassador to Moscow. He received clear instructions - on any terms to resume relations between England and Soviet Russia and develop them in a pro-British direction ... "

On June 22, Hitler even said:

"The German people have never experienced hostile feelings for the peoples of Russia ... "

And even like this:

"I ... fought ... for the establishment in Germany of a new the National Socialist worker to fully order, allowing reap the fruits of his labor... The success of this policy is in the economic and social revival of our people, which, systematically eliminating class and social differences, becomes a truly people's commune - the final phase of world development... "

Demagogy? To a large extent - yes ... But, say, the "democrat" Roosevelt, even in the most critical days for the American elite, could not even conceive of publicly recognizing the ***commune as the highest stage in the development of society*** - even demagogically! And now, knowing the truth, you

begin to understand that it was not Hitler (and certainly not Stalin) who prepared, unleashed and fanned the Second World War. This was the work of the organic bearer of the ideas of World Evil - the supranational Golden Elite of the West ... The work of the Golden Cosmopolitans, and above all - the Yankees!

* * *

STALIN hesitated in assessing Hitler's true intentions and in the strength of his loyalty to the Soviet Union. But the anti-communist Hitler was then overwhelmed with cruel doubts. And that he hesitated can be clearly seen from his little-known letter to Mussolini dated June 21, 1941. It started like this:

"Duce! I am writing this letter to you at a moment when months of hard thinking, as well as eternal nervous waiting, ended in the adoption of the most difficult decision in my life ... Further waiting will lead to disastrous consequences at the latest this or next year ...

After the destruction of France - in general after the liquidation of all their Western European positions - the British warmongers all the time direct their eyes to where they tried to start the war: at the Soviet Union. Both states, Soviet

Russia and England, are equally interested in a disintegrated Europe, weakened by a long war. Behind these states stands the North American Union in an attitude of instigator and expectant ... If we continue to endure this danger,

we will probably have to lose the whole of 1941, and at the same time the general situation will not change in the least. On the contrary, England will be even more opposed to the conclusion of peace, since she will still rely on a Russian partner. Moreover, this hope, of course, will grow as the combat readiness of the Russian armed forces increases. And behind all this, there are still American massive deliveries of military materials that have been expected since 1942 ... ".

Mutual suspicions and anxieties could be removed by looking into each other's eyes, especially since the topic of a personal meeting between Hitler and Stalin had arisen several times since the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, including in conversations between Stalin and Ribbentrop, Molotov and

Hitler. But how could things develop further in this case?

IF the USSR accepted Hitler's proposal to join the Pact of Three, then this would not be a departure of the USSR from the pro-British line, which in reality did not exist for Stalin. Stalin led only one policy - **pro-Russian**, so to speak. But that would be a departure from our slippery neutrality towards long-term political friendliness to the Axis countries. The main thing here could be our refusal to support the anti-German circles in Serbia (as for the

Croats and Slovenes, they were traditionally loyal to the Germans, and the rest of the South Balkan Slavic peoples did not go into a serious "disposition"). Political steps (including the renunciation of activity in the Balkans) could and should have been reinforced by increased supplies to Germany not only

of oil and raw materials, but also, obviously, of the weapons it needed for landing in England by the end of 1941 or in 1942. Officially neutral America supplied weapons to England - allegedly on a commercial basis. So we could do something similar in relation to Germany. Having thus avoided the war with Germany in 1941 and increased the production of armaments at the unevacuated factories of Kharkov and Zaporozhye, Nikolaev and Sevastopol, Kiev and Dnepropetrovsk, Donbass and Rostov, which were not

destroyed by bombing, we would not have received war with England in 1941 - with any of our policies. To win in that situation one peaceful year for rearmament meant for Russia to win stable prospects for building developed socialism. And to ensure the indestructible socialist future of Russia meant everything for Russia!

Germany, however, having given us a peaceful 1941 without real, convincing evidence on our part of stable loyalty to Germany, risked losing everything. After all, time worked not for her, but for the Anglo-Saxons ... And at the same time, it was not clear to Hitler - who would Russia be with in the future? But not giving us a peaceful 41st year meant for

Germany - as real history showed - a civilizational defeat by the end

XX century. After all, now Germany too has fallen under the rule of supranational forces alien to her.

That is, the only mutually reasonable - both tactically and strategically - option for Russia and Germany was an increasingly close and indestructible alliance. Up to the military.

Hitler had to understand that the great future of Germany was ensured only in conditions of peace and friendship with Russia.

Stalin had to understand that the great future of Russia, which is impossible without a socialist system in it, is ensured only with a bloc with the Reich, which would exclude the defeat of Russia in its sole (without the Germans) confrontation with the West in the 20th century.

Therefore, in the book that you, my dear reader, are holding in your hands, **real** past events, facts, figures and the fate of certain historical figures are gradually woven into what I call **rational virtuality...** And in this book the war between Russians and the Germans on June 22, 1941 will not begin. It will not take place at all, but it will be defeated - and in many respects jointly - the British Empire.

However, giving this version of history, I am more than far from the "methodology", say, the authors of the collective collection "Third Reich Victorious: The Alternate History of How the Germans Won the War" ("Third Reich Victory: An Alternative History of How the Germans Won war"), published in London in 2002. A dozen masters, doctors, colonels and lieutenant colonels from England and the United States described in it how the Germans won that war.

Hitler could win the war only by maintaining peace with the USSR and strengthening the alliance with it. Any other options are absolutely incorrect even within the framework of virtual analysis! However, the Anglo-Saxon "analysts" promote Georgy Zhukov to the General Secretaries of the Central Committee of the CPSU (this is with the "live", so to speak, CPSU (b) throughout the forties), and Field Marshal Manstein suits the new "Tannenberg" for the Soviet tank troops in February 45th year "on the plains of Central Poland." On the Western Front, in Normandy, at the same time, of course, a separate truce was signed, which allowed the Germans "to transfer thousands of guns from the western borders of the Reich to the Eastern Front."

Oh, how the Anglo-Saxons (our former sworn "allies") would like, at least on paper, to deprive "these Russians" of the victory of the 45th year! The victory of 1991 is not enough for the Anglo-Saxons, so give them **that one** for slaughter! However,

scientifically and historically only one alternative variant of the Fuhrer's victory is sound - together with Russia! So I gave this option ... Also, alas, on paper!

But here, as they say, everything I can.

AND NOW I will notify the reader that, while working on this book, I used many documentary sources and, say, almost all the digital and factual data given in the text (with the exception of obviously virtual ones) correspond to the real situation of the late 30s - early 40s of XX century. I wanted to give - as far as possible within a relatively small book - a diverse, but

historically consistent picture of that era, including many **realized** situations and details in the narrative. Accordingly, many dialogues, certain circumstances, etc. are based on real historical data. However, in this book, the author introduces reality into his story to the extent that it is justified and necessary to fulfill the main task: weaving into the fabric of real events and facts **of** 41 and 42 a virtual picture of such a rational variant of the development of events, such a rational history that would become a natural and logical result of the mutually rational actions of the two great powers - the USSR and Germany and their leaders - Reich Chancellor Adolf Hitler and General Secretary of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR Joseph Stalin. Therefore, the conversation, for example, between the chief of the Abwehr, Admiral Canaris, and his assistant Hans Oster, given in the chapter "Canaris Memorandum", is completely invented by the author, although it is very possible that they were talking about something like that. But Oster's conversation with the head of the operations department of von Leeb's headquarters, Colonel Vincenz

Muller is actually documentary - it is given according to the memoirs of Muller

himself. Hitler's conversation with the Reich Ambassador in Moscow, Schulenburg, is also documented. There is only one difference from the real story - in my book, the conversation is conducted on a virtual train that takes Hitler to virtual Moscow in 1941, but the real conversation took place on April 28, 1941 in Berlin. And this conversation very unusually highlights the then situation in Europe. During that conversation, Hitler asked his ambassador: "What the hell pulled the Russians to conclude a friendship pact with Yugoslavia?" This phrase is absent from my book, because in the virtual history I described, Stalin prudently refrained from supporting the Serbs.

I also corrected the conversation between Molotov and Schulenburg on December 12, 1940, given in the first chapter. The real Molotov then rejected the request of the Germans for the transit through the USSR of equipment for an auxiliary German cruiser, which was settling in Japan, and the virtual Molotov granted it. I stipulate the

last case especially, because now I will give the respected reader some guiding thread for a better orientation ... The facts, chronologically related to the time **until the end of** December 1940, are not invented by the author - with the exception of a personal meeting between Stalin and Hitler, of course. So, in the USA, indeed, already in the summer of 1938, measures were taken at the state level to counteract German exports to the USA and Latin America. Actually, this was a declaration by the United States of preventive economic war against Germany. And, as you know, a "hot" war is just a continuation of politics (including, and above all, economic) by other means. If any facts or dialogues of real historical figures are given in the book **after** December 1940, then they can be both

"virtual" and real. Here, for example, is a selective chronology of a number of real historical facts of the beginning of 1941, introduced by the author into the "virtual" year 1941:

On January 14, 1941, the British Admiralty announced the first German dive attack.

bombers on British warships in the Mediterranean. January 21
British Minister of

Labor Ernest Bevin

announced a program of forced recruitment of industry men
and women. On March 11, the Lend-

Lease Act was passed in the United States.

April - Yankees land in Greenland and
begin to build their military bases there.

April 1-May 31 - Anti-British uprising in Iraq led by Rashid Ali
Gailani. April 13 - signing of the neutrality

pact between the USSR and Japan. April 24-29 - English
troops evacuated

from Greece.

All of the above actually happened. And, say, the appointment of Ivan
Tevosyan as First Deputy Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars in
May 1941, or the transfer by the Soviet Union of five hundred obsolete tanks
to Germany and Italy in the spring of 1941 and hundreds of torpedo bombers
to Japan in the spring of 42, these are, of course, "facts" of "virtual" history .
The key, but, alas, also

"virtual" fact in the book is the refusal of the USSR to conclude a pact of
friendship and non-aggression (!?) with the Belgrade government of Simovic.
In reality, this pact was concluded in Moscow on April 5, 1941 - a day before
the Wehrmacht and Luftwaffe attack on Yugoslavia. Simovic, by the way, like
the Yugoslav ambassador to Moscow Gavrilovich, was a member of the Black
Hand secret society, which contributed to the outbreak of the First World War
in the interests of the United States. Completely historically real is such an
interesting

document as the Korsvant memorandum, which, in a light that is
completely unusual for us, shows how some prominent Nazis imagined the
world of the future. Documented as Hitler's statement to Molotov on November
13, 1940

of the year:

"I regret that I have not yet been able to meet such a huge
historical figure as Mr.

Stalin ... Especially since I think that maybe I myself will fall into history ... ”,

So is Molotov's answer:

“Yes, such a meeting would be desirable ... And I hope that such a meeting will take place...”

Actually, almost all dialogues and facts (with the exception of obviously virtual ones) are documented in the book, which have an **exact and complete** dating, that is: "... such and such a date of such and such a year." But I tried to make this documentary reality logically grow into a rational - from the point of view of the interests of the peoples of the world - virtuality. For one thing **to grow** into another ... There is no desire to confuse the reader or "show off". After all, in that era (as, indeed, now), the reasonable was confused with the

unreasonable, the logical with the absurd. And I, trying to leave in my story the really former reasonable details, was forced to introduce virtual rationality instead of the really former absurdity. And the farther from December 1940, the greater the share of purely virtual details in the book becomes. To be more precise - rational, although unrealized! However, it is impossible to explain to the reader about every detail. Moreover, even Soviet encyclopedic sources are not always accurate... For example, I found three different dates for the occupation of Baghdad by the British after the suppression of the uprising

in Iraq (in my book - not suppressed, but successful): May 31, June 1,

and even June 2, 1941... But I, the author of this book, still had somewhat different tasks than correcting academicians in detail.

So I apologize in advance and without a shadow of irony to connoisseurs of details, if they find blunders somewhere with me. However, I hope that just the connoisseurs will be able to fully appreciate in my work what, in my opinion, fully deserves a positive assessment in it.

In MY first books, with which the reader may be familiar, I already carried out the main idea that Russia in the outside world could not have any other main constructive partner, except for Germany - whether Kaiser, whether Weimar, whether nationalist ... It was precisely the strategic alliance of these two powers, developing at the expense of their own talents, would lead to peace in Europe and, accordingly, would rule out war there. If everything were so, then the United States would never be able to think about the role of the master of Europe and the world. That is why the forces of the World Evil did everything to play off two potentially friendly and complementary countries both in 1914 and in 1941.

Saying this, I do not fall into some kind of Germanophilism, which some active participants in Internet forums suspect me of ... I am a consistent Russian Soviet patriot and I love not Germany, but Russia. Germany - as one of the three most distinctive phenomena in the history of the XIX-XX centuries (the other two are Russia and Japan) - I just respect. Slavophiles have long been unable to forgive Bismarck for not defending the interests

of Russia at the Berlin Congress after the Russian-Turkish war of 1877-1878. However, not everyone can be so simpletons as to neglect their own national interests for the sake of some "uncle" ... Russians often don't give a damn about Russia, and Bismarck respected many countries and peoples, and loved one country - his own, as he loved and only one people - own, German. I'm not complaining about him for that. I myself, I repeat, love only my people - Russian, Soviet. But I love him with open eyes... This heart should be hot, and hands should be clean. The mind, on the other hand, must be cold, clear - for some reason, this third term of the Dzerzhinsky

formula is often, alas, forgotten. And cold reason leads to the conclusion that it was not the intransigence of ideologies (indeed, they are very different in a number of fundamental provisions), not an objective conflict, but the provocations of the enemies of Russia and Germany that led us to the second war between the Russians and the Germans. And also - unsurmounted mutual distrust, the grounds for which were given to each other by both sides.

Both!

And both sides did not do everything that could and should have been done.

In 1985, the Military Publishing House published the memoirs of Marshal Chuikov "From Stalingrad to Berlin". And there, on page 529, there is an indicative opinion of a lieutenant colonel of the German General Staff, taken prisoner in January 1945, of real history. In a conversation with General Chuikov then, a German, a completely convinced Nazi, said:

"Peace is needed not only by the Germans, but also by the Russians. Your allies are unreliable. We Germans can come to terms with you and be reliable neighbors, and maybe even allies against your current allies.

- Why, then, in the forty-first Germans, violating the non-aggression pact, attacked our peaceful country, which did not threaten anyone? asked Vasily Ivanovich. And the general staff officer answered:

- The rapid growth of the Land of Soviets inspired us with fear, we were afraid that you would be the first to attack us. Hitler decided to get ahead of you, which made the biggest mistake. We didn't expect the Soviets to be so strong. Our General Staff and Hitler miscalculated...

But we also miscalculated, dear reader! We miscalculated by allowing Hitler to go to war with us. And as a result, the planet has lost that quite possible development of the world situation, which is described in my new book. As for the Great War between Russians and Germans, if you look at its objective background, it can be regarded by us, the descendants of the heroes of that war, as a misunderstanding. But this does not mean that the sacrifices, efforts and exploits of these heroes were meaningless in that real subjective situation in which the peoples of the world, Europe and, in particular, the German and Soviet peoples, the Golden Elite and their shameless, cynical and corrupt lackeys from politics were driven, as well as left-wing fanatics of the "world fire", who ultimately served the same Forces of World Evil. After these forces

were able to push Hitler onto a path that was disastrous for him and for his Germany, we Russians had no choice but to take up arms and defend the freedom and independence of our Soviet Motherland in fierce battles with the German fascist invaders. However, the world described in this book could become a reality.

And not Stalin and Hitler are to blame for what actually happened

otherwise.

How often in all these decades that have passed since the Second World War, Western historians, publicists, writers and politicians have lamented that they were at war with the wrong people. It was necessary, they say, to fight not against Hitler together with the Soviets, but against the Soviets together with Hitler. There was no need, they say, to enter into an alliance with these Russians - albeit forced, temporary, unnatural ...

And we, simple-hearted Russians, proved everything to them - no, that's right, an alliance between the West and Hitler would not bring benefits to the West. But not once did we ask ourselves the question - did we fight in alliance with the right one ? Was it not profitable and reasonable for us to fight together with the Fuhrer, with the Duce, with the Land of the Rising Sun against the West, against England and the

USA? To someone such a question of mine - despite everything said above - may still seem even blasphemous. And I understand this... It is not easy, it is very difficult to look at the past era from such a position. I have already written before and I will

repeat it again: in a peaceful, unrealized, but possible turn of events, Soviet soldiers on the parade ground of the Brest Fortress would not have died under German bullets, but would continue to hold parades there together with the Germans ... The Dneproges and the Kharkov turbine plant would not have been destroyed factories, Zaporizhstal and the Stalingrad Tractor Plant, Kiev Khreshchatyk and Sevastopol Panorama ... Tens of thousands of large and small Soviet plants and factories would remain intact

and produce for the peoples of the USSR and the world, tens of thousands of Ukrainian, Belarusian and Great Russian villages would be buried in the gardens and villages...

And millions of new young builders of the new world would live, work and create - Commissar Rudnev and his son Radik, engineer Konstantin Zaslonov and writer Arkady Gaidar, Muscovites Zoya and Shura Kosmodemyansky and Krasnodon Oleg Koshevoy with Ulya Gromova ...

On the other hand, neither the English Isle nor the North American continent would ever again emanate the threat to peace that the United States of America is increasingly representing today.

The forces of World Evil conceived and carried out both World Wars, making Germany, potentially friendly to us, our worst enemy. But in this book Russians and Germans do not stand chest to shoulder against each other, but stand back to back against the evil forces of the outside world hostile to Creation.

I am convinced that in reality it would not hurt the Russians and Germans to stand up that way. Stand up both in the past and - at least - today.

Taking into account all the past joint mistakes.

January 13, 2009

Prologue with real beginning and virtual continuation and ending

After the end of World War I, at the Paris Peace Conference at Versailles, the Entente and the United States imposed on defeated Germany the humiliating Treaty of Versailles, signed on June 28, 1919. Having corrected the proclaimed principle of the right of nations to self-determination and the national approach to the formation of states, the victors dismembered Germany, creating the Danzig "corridor" for Poland's access to the sea. Germany was also deprived of a purely German city and port Danzig, German Memel, part of German Silesia.

They deprived Germany and all her colonies - both those that she acquired in the usual way of the colonialists, and those that she simply bought at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries from Spain. In other words, the second (after the USA) industrial power of the world was deprived of those markets and sources of raw materials that less developed England, France and even Holland, Belgium, Spain, Portugal, Italy had in abundance ... And this was already programmed by the desire of the Germans to restore justice and sound meaning.

Twenty years passed, and in September 1939, after Poland's repeated refusals by the world to correct the injustices of the Versailles Treaty, Germany liquidated them by force. England and France declared war on the Reich, which immediately received the name "strange". Hitler, after solving

the "Polish problem", wanted peace, but America did not need peace, whose obedient instrument in England were influential figures like Winston Churchill. These forces sent British troops to the Continent and desired an expansion of the war. In particular, England was preparing a landing in Norway in the spring of 1940 in order to strengthen its positions and deprive Germany of sea coastal communications for the delivery of Swedish iron ore to the Reich.

A British landing into Denmark was also possible. Anticipating these plans, in April 1940, Hitler sent troops into two Scandinavian countries, and the bloodlessly occupied Denmark completely retained internal independence and even diplomatic relations with various countries of the world, including Germany itself. With the Soviet Union, they also survived. Neither France nor

England, however, went to the "world". On the other hand, the Anglo-French supported the unjustified ambitions of the Finns in their "winter war" of 1939-1940. against the USSR and planned bombing attacks on the Soviet oil fields in Baku and Grozny.

In May 1940, the Reich launched a swift offensive through Belgium and Holland into northern France, which ended with the evacuation of the British Expeditionary Force from Dunkirk and the collapse of France. Northern France and Paris became a zone of occupation. The rest, not occupied, part of the country was ruled by the government of Marshal Petain, who settled in the resort town of Vichy. The Fuhrer again

solemnly offered peace to England, but Churchill again refused it. And soon after that, the position of the Germans was further complicated by the Italian ally, Mussolini. Having recklessly started hostilities against England in Africa, the Duce invaded Greece in October 1940. As a result, British troops landed on the island of Crete, and the Führer had another political "sore point" - now in the Balkans. The fighting there threatened Romanian oil, without which the strategic reserves of the Reich turned out to be insufficient - then one would have to rely only on German synthetic gasoline. Hitler, wishing for peace, against his will turned out to be a hostage of the current

situation, strategically beneficial to only one power - the United States. In a desire to make it harder for America to enter the war, Hitler proposed to his

ally Mussolini that he conclude a pact with Japan that was unambiguously anti-American. To this end, Berlin sent a special envoy, Heinrich Stamer, to Tokyo for talks with Japanese Foreign Minister Matsuoka. And at the end of September 1940, this pact was signed, and its 5th article directly proclaimed that the new agreement could not be

affects the existing political status between the parties to the Pact and the Soviet Union. America formally stood aside for the

time being, but the "neutral" United States increased its assistance to England. And she was more and more drawn into the war herself, which means that Germany was more and more drawn into it.

On November 20, 1940, the Hungary of Regent Horthy joined the Tripartite Pact, two days later - Romania conductor Antonescu, and a day later - Slovakia Dr. Tiso. At first glance, the Reich went from triumph to triumph, but at the same time he also went from one sore problem to another ...

The position of the Soviet Union after the start of Hitler's Polish campaign, on the contrary, only improved. Thanks to the successes of Germany, we almost bloodlessly regained Western Ukraine and Western Belarus, and in the fall of 1939 we concluded agreements beneficial to us with Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, which were recognized by Hitler as a Soviet sphere of influence. In the outbreak of the war between the USSR

and Finland, which became an anti-Soviet toy in the hands of the Anglo-French and the Yankees, Germany also supported us. Without much enthusiasm, but she also agreed with the return of Bessarabia and the Baltic states to the USSR in the summer of 1940, as well as with the inclusion of Northern Bukovina (previously not part of the Russian Empire) in the USSR. However, the strengthening of Russia

and its new interest in the Balkans worried the Fuhrer very much - especially since England was very flirting with Moscow. Hitler's anxiety could not help but worry

Stalin too - the Fuhrer's party pseudonym was "Wolf", and driving a wolf into a stalemate is always dangerous. So the general state of affairs - for all its apparent success - was not very pleasing to the Russian leader either. In November 1940, the Soviet Prime Minister and at the same time People's Commissar for

Foreign Affairs Molotov came to Berlin for talks with his colleague Ribbentrop and Hitler personally.

It was already the fourth hour of the second long conversation on November 13,

when the Fuhrer said: - I am extremely sorry that I have not yet been able to meet with such a huge historical figure as Mr. Stalin ... Especially since I myself, maybe, will get into

history . "Yes, your personal meeting would be desirable," Molotov replied. "And I hope it still happens. It is unlikely that

both interlocutors then had even the slightest confidence in the possibility of such an early meeting. However, it took place a week later - in the old Russian, Slavic Brest, in the Citadel of the Brest Fortress. This fortress at the confluence of the Bug and Mukhavets, once built by the Russians on the borders of the Russian state, never once heard the battle drone of guns until the autumn of 1939 - when it, which already belonged to "Versailles" Poland, was taken after a short and light assault by the advanced units of Heinz Guderian .

Brest was on our side of the demarcation line, and the Germans soon left it, holding a parade of troops, which was received by Guderian himself and the Russian brigade commander

Krivoshey. Brest lay almost in the middle of a straight line between Berlin and Moscow. And Stalin chose it as the place of his meeting with the Fuhrer. They met and thereby immediately abruptly changed the entire balance of world political forces and plans.

The Brest meeting has not yet become, and could not become decisive. Moreover, it solves the whole complex of difficult practical problems. And it could not change the political ideology of the two powers overnight. But the turn was nevertheless made - before the eyes of the entire stunned world. Both the Fuhrer and Stalin could, of course, turn away from each other again, but ...

But their first meeting became a fact. And now the press on both sides of both the Atlantic and the Pacific was filled with political forecasts, analyzes and reports of the most varied tone - from hysteria to hope. Cripps, the British ambassador

in Moscow, pressed in vain for an audience with Molotov, and his American "older brother" Lawrence Steingard was no more successful in this. However, Steingard even now

looked at the "Ivans" without respect, and therefore, having once tried to fulfill an order from Washington and

having received a polite turn from the gate (they say, Mr. Molotov is still extremely busy), he limited himself to this. He was more concerned about the construction of a gas storage near the embassy's mansion. And if the Russians were in no hurry with this, then should the States rush to lift the "moral embargo" on trade with the Soviets, which was introduced with the start of the Soviet-Finnish war?

British Prime Minister Churchill and President Roosevelt immediately overwhelmed their field communications with work, exchanging a dozen messages in two weeks, the meaning of which could be conveyed in four words: "fortune telling on coffee

grounds." Mussolini urgently sent his daughter's husband, Foreign Minister Galeazzo Ciano, to Berlin, but the handsome son-in-law was told that the Fuhrer intended to meet with the Duce in person and then he would explain everything himself.

Europe was buzzing not so much from bomb explosions on both sides of the English Channel, but from the most incredible rumors... Someone in Bucharest assured that Hitler and Stalin parted with an expression of mutual hatred and irreconcilable hostility on their faces, and in Budapest, on the contrary, a Hungarian nabob with a sour expression on his sleek face reported that, according to reliable information, the Russians, together with the Germans, were preparing a grandiose airborne assault on the English

Island ...

Hitler, on the other hand ... Halder with a report on the current situation and after that gave the order to prepare a general plan of operations against the Soviet Union.

And on December 6, 1940, the chief of staff of the operational leadership of the Supreme High Command of the German Armed Forces, Lieutenant General Alfred Jodl, summoned his deputy, head of the country's defense department, Major General Walter Warlimont.

Warlimont was considered by many to be too slippery and pomaded - he did not look like a typical Prussian, and he was not, coming, like the Chief of the General Staff of the Ground Forces Franz Halder, from Bavaria. Admiral Canaris, himself the sly of the sly and

porch of the porch, once said of Warlimont: "This is a cunning guy." In 1936—

37, Warlimont (not yet a general at that time) was a military attache in Spain with Franco and there he got to know Canaris (already an admiral at that time), who had been his own man in Spain since the First World War. As for Jodl, Canaris

either did not like him, or was even afraid of him. Even though Jodl was also a Bavarian - from Würzburg. It was, however, not a matter of fellow countrymen - Warlimont had a sharp mind, and Jodl chose him to carry out a responsible and delicate assignment. — Warlimont! The Commander-in-Chief ordered that plans for

a possible Russian campaign be worked out in more detail with readiness for the next spring. — Dare I ask, Herr Lieutenant General, this

the initiative of Brauchitsch himself or did he also receive an order? — As far as I am aware, the second is true... — But what about

the "spirit of Brest"? — Warlimont! Brest is politics... And your business is concrete military planning. However, of course, one cannot lose sight of the political moment ... How much time do you need to prepare the Fuhrer's directive? - Weeks two. - Then - with God!

DID NOT even two weeks have passed since the directive with serial number 21 was ready. In the cards, "21" is a "point" ... But an extra bribe, and this is already too much. In maps... And in politics? Warlimont could not help but puzzle over the obsessive and disturbing thought of the future. His plan,

codenamed Fritz, began like this:

"The German armed forces must be ready to defeat Soviet Russia in the course of a short

campaign before the end of the war against England ... "

And although Warlimont himself wrote these opening lines, they sat in his brain like splinters. And the thought sat there like a splinter: "Will we sort out bribes?"

With this thought, the general entered the Fuhrer's office on December 18, 1940, where a meeting on the Fritz plan was about to begin. Hitler, having learned about the proposal of the OKW to name the plan that way, thought about it, and then said:

— Fritz? Well, gentlemen, to remember the name of the great Frederick - it's witty! However, if we start a war with the Russians, it will not be just a military campaign... It will be a new crusade against Bolshevism. The generals were silent,

although everyone noted the important "if ..." to themselves, spoken by the Fuhrer. Hitler suggested:

- We will call this plan the name of another Frederick - Frederick Barbarossa ... The Great Kaiser of the Holy Roman Empire, he led the third Crusade, and his red beard is worthy of its flame illuminating our struggle ... On the same day, December 18, 1940, the

Fuhrer approved the plan "Barbarossa". But plans are not always made to be followed. Sometimes they are made just in case - in reserve. And no one knew what fate was in store for the headquarters version of the Barbarossa. Including Hitler.

Chapter 1

The year 1940 was ending. The year 1941 was coming... And the Fuhrer more and more often returned in his thoughts to the Brest meeting. Now, as time passed, he was more and more surprised by her businesslike, unpompous character, which was set immediately, from the first minutes, by Stalin. Yes, Stalin! No tinsel parades and guards of honor, which so tired him in Rome at the Duce, no thousands of orchestras, no fireworks. The soldier's severity of the serfs and the soldier's simplicity of business conversations... And the same business parade... - no, not a parade, but a display of the latest military equipment, including - and in action. Everything in Brest differed from the European protocol not only in form, but also, it seems, in content. Stalin's proposals were interesting and impressive. The Führer was also struck by the demonstration of Russian tank power - now his mind's eye often saw the picture of a mighty avalanche, grinding the November land of Belarus with steel caterpillar tracks ... New Russian tanks, and especially the diesel T-34, now haunted him - like Guderian, who became after Brest thoughtful, somehow especially collected. The Fuhrer increasingly recalled the muffled voice of Stalin, who then said very bad words in his ear in bad German: "These tanks will never go across the border." That would be simply wonderful, but words are just words... But how will Stalin act in this year that is just beginning? But will it be needed? Well, this should have shown the near future. The nearest, just past, the past was not very pleasing ... England refused the world. The Duce did not have much success either in Europe - in the Balkans, or in Africa. On the other hand, possible failures in Italian Libya were identified.

Libya... An ancient desert, sandy country, adorned with rare emeralds and oases with enticing names – Marada, Djalo, Jerabub, Siwa...

Life in Libya, as well as in North Africa in general, is stretched along the coast. Here is the blue Mediterranean Sea ... If you look to the east, then to the left of it is Europe. And to the right? Geographically to the right is Africa, but historically, civilizationally, it is rather Asia. Arabs, Berbers... Once the west of North Africa was

ruled by the Moors. Now there were Moors here too, but - under the rule of Spain: the Sahara, Morocco ... Further, to the east - French Algeria and Tunisia. Ancient Roman colonies... Once upon a time there, on a shallow, difficult to storm coast, stood Rome's rival - Carthage. And even to the east, between the now French Tunisia and the English fiefdom - Egypt,

stretches plateau Libya. Now - Italian ... The only major bay is the Greater Sirte. In the western part of Libya is the province of Tripolitania, with its center in Tripoli. Founded by the Phoenicians almost three thousand years ago as their colony of Oea (Eya), later called by the Arabs Tarabulus el Gharb, Tripoli became one of the two major Libyan ports. The second was Tobruk in the eastern Libyan province of Cyrenaica, already bordering Egypt. Ancient lands... And strategically important lands.

IN SEPTEMBER 40, the commander-in-chief of the Italian troops in North Africa and the governor-general of Tripolitania, Marshal Rodolfo Graziani, launched an attack on Egypt from the territory of Libya with the forces of eight divisions. The Fuhrer then offered the Duce help, but he rejected it. The Italians marched in the coastal zone in the direction of Alexandria and at first they went well, having taken Sidi Barrani already on the Egyptian coast by September 16 ... And now, "at the end" of 1940 - on December 9 - the British launched a successful counteroffensive. 16

December, Es-Saloum fell, and before that, without a fight, Sidi Barrani was again occupied. The Italians were pushed back to Libya.

On 22 December, in a report to Mussolini, Graziani reported that the British offensive in the Western Desert had been launched a few days before the Italian attack was planned, and acknowledged the "overwhelming superiority" of the enemy's armored units. The Italians were sorely lacking in armored vehicles, and the Fuhrer immediately remembered that in Brest Stalin offered him to share old Soviet tanks with the allies of the Reich, which in the African theater of operations, against the Britons, might not be so old.

Stalin, however, had in mind Romania - to reassure Antonescu. And it was only about a hundred tanks. The Fuhrer himself chuckled at this "only ...". For Graziani, this would mean a lot ...

Back in early December 1940, on the 3rd, Hitler spoke with Halder about the allocation of equipment to Italy. - How

much can we allocate to the Duce trucks, Halder? he then asked the Chief of the General Staff of the Ground Forces. - Up to eight hundred, my Fuhrer ... - he answered,

checking the records. - The first stage - two hundred and fifty cars by the first of January forty-first ...

- And then? the Fuhrer hurried the general impatiently. - The second stage - perhaps a hundred cars by the first of March, the rest - by the first of May. "In total, by the

beginning of spring we will give them only three hundred and fifty? ... Not much ... And what about

fuel? "Fuel is bad," Halder sighed. And it's even worse with tires. Yes, even a hundred Russian tanks

would have been a godsend for Graziani. And only for Graziani? After all, the British must be contained - at least. And as a maximum it is necessary to cut them off from Middle Eastern oil and use it ourselves either in the interests of continuing the war, or in the interests of peace with the islanders. However, England did not want to put up. At the end of December

1940, a significant reshuffle took place in Churchill's military cabinet. Edward Halifax resigned as Minister of Foreign Affairs and was

appointed ambassador to the United States. The new chief of the Foreign Office was Halifax's longtime opponent, handsome Anthony Eden. The former leader of the Tory faction in the Commons, Captain David Henry Reginald, 1st Viscount Margesson, became Secretary of State for War. Churchill retained the post of Minister of Defense. The head of "Vichy"

France, Marshal Petain, rejected Hitler's demand for the transfer of the French fleet to Germany. On December 13, 1940, he dismissed Laval from the post of Minister of Foreign Affairs - Admiral Darlan's group intrigued against him, accusing Laval of ... intrigues. Hitler did not like this step of the elderly marshal, but Petain did not agree to the restoration of Laval, replacing him with Flandin.

Jean-Francois Darlan became prime minister in the "Vichy government", and it was a big question whether this strengthened Germany's position in France. The admiral was a controversial figure, he could bow to both ours and yours. And on the other side of the Mediterranean in the French possessions, Maxim Weygand was in charge - not very subordinate to Petain and prone to Germanophobia.

Franco in Spain, as before, waited. It's good that he personally was very loyal to the Reich. However, Spain has not yet been counted on.

In Finland, however, the pro-German orientation to the war won - on December 19, 1940, in opposition to Helo, put forward by anti-war circles, Risto Ryti was elected president. Three months earlier, Ryti had signed an agreement in Berlin, according to which Finland was obliged to take part - in the event of a conflict between Germany and Russia - in the hostilities on the side of the Reich. In his New Year's speech on December 31, 1940, Ryti formulated his political course as follows: "Strengthen and deepen friendly relations with Germany." In addition, back in July 1940, the

Swedes agreed to the transit of German military materials and troops (formally "vacationers") to Norway and Finland via Swedish railways. A German transport commandant's office was established in Stockholm.

But all these were private successes far from the center of events. Central Europe remained their center, although the nerve of the situation

painfully fought on the other side of the Mediterranean Sea - on its African coast.

* * *

The BREST turn in Germany was generally received with joy. Still would! In a difficult world situation for the Reich, a certain gap suddenly appeared. And he gave birth to new hopes and new hopeful prospects.

Glad was the development of affairs after Brest and the Moscow ambassador of the Reich Schulenburg. He seemed to have rejuvenated. Both he and his trusted entourage now recalled, like a bad dream, the time when Russian foreign policy was led by "Maxim Litvinov." The diplomats of the Reich in Moscow always treated him with distrust and hostility, but Meer Moiseevich Wallakh-Litvinov didn't really like them much either, just like his trusted entourage. In this regard, Yevgeny Gnedin, head of the press department of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, a polished Jew in his early forties, was a typical figure. The son of the notorious Parvus Gelfand, he was born in 1898 in Dresden and appeared in Moscow in 1920, from 1922 to 1939 working intermittently in the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, then in Moscow newspapers. In 1924, Gnedin was in charge of the trade and economic department at the People's Commissariat, from 1931 to 1935 he was deputy head of the foreign editorial office of Izvestia, and in 1935-1937 he was the first secretary of the embassy in Berlin. Since 1937,

Gnedin was already in charge of the press department of the People's Commissariat and spoiled a lot of blood both for Schulenburg and for the entire Moscow German embassy.

Count von Schulenburg had counted on Stalin's turn towards Germany since the autumn of 1938 and was looking forward to Litvinov's dismissal from the post of People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, and at the same time the arrest of his henchmen, including Gnedin. In May of the 39th, the count waited for this. And now, almost two years later, Schulenburg sometimes simply did not believe that in the same mansion on Spiridonovka he was becoming more and more welcome guest.

In December 1940, negotiations took place between Schulenburg and Molotov. With Schulenburg were the head of the Eastern European

referentur of the economic policy department of the German Foreign Ministry - ausamta - Dr. Schnurre and embassy adviser Hilger. The first conversation on December 12, 1940 took a little over an hour, while the second, on December 21, dragged on

for almost two hours. On December 12, the German ambassador raised a very subtle question: "Herr Molotov! We have already asked you to allow the transit of our two planes and boxes of spare parts and medicines to Japan for the German ship, which will be stationed in Kobe. The German side assures you that these shipments are not intended for the Japanese government. For your convenience, they can be sent from Vladivostok to Japan on a regular merchant ship so that a German ship does not call at Vladivostok. Molotov, who was always so restrained, frowned completely: "I don't understand... This question is surrounded by mystery and is incomprehensible. At first it was about airplanes. Now some more boxes are being added. We cannot decide here with our eyes closed.

Schulenburg hesitated a little, but answered distinctly: - Actually, everything is simple ... The fact is that our auxiliary cruiser operates in the Pacific Ocean, and all items are intended for it. The fact that we surround the issue with secrecy is natural... Germany is in a state of war... I think it would be inconvenient for you for the cruiser to enter Vladivostok.

"But, Mr. Ambassador, this matter affects not only Soviet-German, but also Soviet-Japanese relations. Why wouldn't your cruiser go to Japan and get it all from the Japanese?

- Herr Molotov, Japan does not produce the necessary parts and medicines. And since we need the cargo, not the Japanese, this concerns only us and you. We hope that the Soviet side will meet Germany

halfway. Molotov kept frowning, and Schulenburg suggested: "Perhaps the Soviet government wishes to receive assurances from the Japanese government that it agrees with this operation?"

- Does it agree? -

Yes.

The Soviet prime minister thought... Now everything was really clear. By agreeing to such a transit, Moscow, albeit modestly,

actually supported the war effort of the Germans against the British. Both the British and the Yankees could not like it. And, all things considered, the service was not so frivolous. Stalin and Molotov thought a lot about this request of the Germans, estimating this way and that ... Still not knowing about the purpose and type of the ship, both were well aware of the delicacy of the matter. Nobody keeps secrets like that without serious reasons.

However, after weighing everything, Stalin made the decision in principle. In the end, neutral America supplied the belligerent England not only with military materials, but even weapons. And this is a more important service than simple transit. So Molotov's answer was prepared, and it was the answer "Yes!". And

Schulenburg received this "yes" on December

12. However, there were enough in December conversations and mutual "no" - both sides had little excess goods ... Nevertheless, in the end, the Russians agreed to supply the Reich with a million tons of grain from the strategic reserve, subject to more significant reciprocal supplies from Germany than so far. The list of these deliveries

was already long, and Germany only in exchange for Russian alumina undertook to supply thirty thousand tons of aluminum and one hundred and fifty tons of cobalt to the USSR.

THIS is how things went in Moscow... And in Berlin at the end of November 1940, on the 28th, a new plenipotentiary representative of the USSR, forty-three-year-old Vladimir Dekanozov, arrived. He was appointed plenipotentiary with the rank of deputy people's commissar for foreign affairs, and this spoke for itself. Nevertheless, even after a week and a half, Dekanozov had not yet been received by Hitler for the presentation of his credentials and was nervous.

On December 12, 1940, he was received by the chief of the ausamt, Ribbentrop, in the presence of his chief of protocol, Baron

Dernberg. "I am glad to see you in my office again, Herr Dekanozov," the Reich Minister cordially greeted the guest, "and to see you as a confidant of Mr. Stalin and Mr. Molotov. "I'm glad of that too, Herr Ribbentrop, but...

- Yes Yes! I understand that you would like to introduce yourself to the Führer as soon as possible, and he will probably receive you in the middle of next week. Now he is not in Berlin - time of war... After a few quite secular phrases, Ribbentrop could not stand it: - Herr Dekanozov, you are obviously a Georgian? - Yes ... - And, perhaps, you were familiar with Mr. Stalin from childhood? Dekanozov smiled: "No, we didn't know each other then ... And in general, I'm on nineteen years younger..."

Here the plenipotentiary smiled even wider and, taking something rectangular, flat, carefully packed from the hands of the interpreter Pavlov, handed it to the minister, saying at the same time: - This is a personal gift for you from Comrade Stalin. I beg Sorry for the delay, but I wanted to deliver in person.

Released from the packaging, the gift turned out to be a portrait of Stalin. Ribbentrop was clearly flattered and profusely expressed gratitude. "Oh, I remember our meetings in Moscow..." he repeated. - Then A very important step has been taken!

"Of course," the plenipotentiary agreed, and the conversation again took on a secular character. "I

hope you will stay with us for a long time, Herr Dekanozov," the Reichsminister said, "and you will be able to witness the big construction in Germany ... After the end of the war, and I think it won't take long, the Fuhrer's grandiose plan will be implemented. — I heard about it. - Three hundred thousand new apartments will be built - up to five or six rooms in an

apartment ... We need to ensure population growth, and a healthy population! — We also build a lot in the USSR. - Yes, such construction is possible only with the assistance of the state ...

With the end of the war, we will have to solve big tasks.

- And how long do you determine the end of the war, Herr Ribbentrop?

But here, in response, Dekanozov did not hear anything new compared to what he had already heard from the owner of the cabinet and Hitler a month ago: they say that England lost the war and will soon understand this ...

Soon the conversation turned to the topic of the admissibility of the probable rapprochement between Finns and Swedes and also ended quite secularly.

And a week later, on December 19, 1940, Dekanozov, to the drumbeat of the guard of honor, passed through the courtyard of the Imperial Chancellery. Nearby were the advisers of the embassy Kobulov and Semyonov, the invariable translator Pavlov and the assistant to the military attache captain 2nd rank Vorontsov.

Dekanozov, Pavlov, Chief of the Reich Chancellery Meissner, Deputy Chief of Protocol Halem, and a German translator entered the Fuhrer's office. The Fuhrer was waiting for

them, standing in a huge office with Ribbentrop. The official introduction procedure began, and then Hitler offered to sit down and immediately asked:

"Have you come with your family, Herr Dekanozov?" "I look forward

to her coming soon, Herr Chancellor. - I could

not accept you before, I was very busy ... - I understand and did

not experience any special difficulties, - he reassured

Dekanozov added: "I am completely at your disposal..."

- Great! I think you will have to negotiate in the normal way, and I will intervene from time to time, when necessary ... - Yes, this is exactly what Comrade

Molotov agreed with Mr.

Ribbentrop, and I am aware of this ...

- Great! It is very good that you were present at our conversations in November...

inquired in the manner of his minister:

- You do not come from the same places, Mr. Ambassador, as Mr. Stalin?

— No,

my parents are from there, and I was born in Baku. -

And have you known Mr. Stalin for a long time through revolutionary work?

- I am forty-two years old, Mr. Reich Chancellor, and Comrade Stalin is over sixty ... I have only been in the party since the twentieth year, in the Red Army - since the eighteenth ...

- Yes ?! You are the youngest ambassador in Berlin! In the old days, no one became an ambassador before the age of sixty-five, now everything has changed! exclaimed the Fuhrer.

"In Germany, too, young cadres are being promoted to various branches of state work," Dekanozov noted diplomatically, and Hitler immediately confirmed: "Oh, yes, it used

to be impossible to become an ambassador or a general before reaching the age of sixty-five, but now we consider generals that age already old. The Fuhrer

was very kind, but his next question to Dekanozov surprised at first. Is there a bomb shelter

in your embassy? — Bad, in essence, it's just a basement. - Then I can put at your

disposal, Mr. Ambassador, my leading specialist in these matters, Minister Todt - the builder of our autobahns. Before the war, we built thousands of kilometers of excellent roads every year, now the war is getting in the way.

- Thank you! I also received instructions about this from Comrade Molotov," Dekanozov replied, not understanding why the Chancellor was interested in such a petty

question. Ribbentrop did not understand this either, and, intervening, suggested: "These details can be

discussed with me..." - Our anti-aircraft defense is strong, but one or two aircraft can break through. I'm thinking of building a more substantial shelter in Bellevue Palace. Bellevue is a state residence, a month

ago Dekanozov was there with Molotov ... "Why is he telling me all this?" thought Dekanozov in bewilderment, and Hitler, looking searchingly at him, added:

stay in this palace of great statesmen.

And Dekanozov understood: "He's hinting at Stalin! Like, we will ensure security, let him come ... "But he left this guess

with me.

The reception lasted for more than half an hour, the time was running out, and there was only enough time left to clarify the current details and bow out.

The year was coming to an end. But any end is the beginning of something new... And the approaching the new, 1941 year promised the Soviet plenipotentiary a lot of trouble. Of this he was certain!

ZATO Moscow Ambassador of Britain Stafford Cripps by the beginning of 1941 was not sure of anything ... Six months ago, with great adventures due to the summer offensive of the Wehrmacht in France, he reached the Russian capital, and he was immediately received by Stalin himself. And I talked to him for three hours! The case is unprecedented.

And now the Russians were getting colder and colder... But if the Russian People's Commissar Molotov shied away from meeting with the British ambassador, then the Russian plenipotentiary in London, Ivan Maisky, could not evade the invitation of the British Minister Eden.

On December 23, 1940, Eden replaced Halifax in the Foreign Office, and already on December 27, Maisky entered his office. Under prim Halifax it was gloomy here, but under the new owner - cheerful, cheerful, contented - lamps were lit on all the tables in the office. And immediately it became lighter and more comfortable.

Nodding at the lamps, Eden explained, as if apologetically: "I like it when there is a lot of light." But the tone of the Englishman was as if all this illumination was arranged by him in honor of Maisky ... Yes, they tried to court the Russians. After all, they swiftly sailed away from all the lovingly cherished plans of the World Elite. Instead of providing a headache for Hitler, they almost panicked the entire establishment on both sides of the Atlantic. Still would! Stalin and Hitler - side by side, eye to eye! No, it was necessary to immediately show everyone (and the

Fuhrer above all): there are no organic contradictions in the sphere of foreign policy between England and Russia. Like, the war of England with

Germany has not changed the situation here in any way, and everything is going, they say, as it should.

Eden immediately announced this to Maisky, adding: "I don't think you could wish for our defeat, not out of love for us, but simply because it would not be in your interests." Therefore, irreconcilable conflicts between us

No...

Eden smiled broadly and declared:

"I will do my best to put our friendly relations, but... Here he smiled even wider and finished: - But such an adjustment will be possible if there is a corresponding desire on your part. "Mr. Eden," Maisky objected, "the root of the complications lies not on our side, but on the British side ... The British government sought to interfere in such matters that either did not concern it at all, or had a very remote relation to British interests. The best example of this is the Baltics ...

Eden immediately interrupted the plenipotentiary: "You don't want us to praise you for that?" The tone was supposedly joking, but Maisky - we must give him his due - did not accept the "joke", dryly answered in the sense that we ourselves know what is good and what is bad, and do not expect other people's praise.

"However, we cannot help but react when you try

put a spoke in the wheels of our most natural and lawful

action," he continued. - In the Baltics, you broke a lot of firewood. And if you want to improve relations, then you need to start clearing the ground in the Baltic issue. Here you are detaining five Baltic ships in Ireland ... But they are now ours ...

Poor ships! Mankind found itself at the most important crossroads in its history, and Maisky reduced everything to a few steam vessels! All the more so since Eden intended to make them the subject of a provocative "friendly" demonstration and declared:

"I would like to give Cripps the opportunity to settle this case in Moscow...

The motives for such a position of the British Foreign Minister were transparent - he had to create the impression

the strength of the Cripps position!

Maisky, having talked more about this and that, got ready to leave, and Eden, like a skilled barker, began to insistently invite him. - Come

to see me more often, and not only on any specific cases, but just like that - just when there is nothing specific. It is very useful, you know, Mr Maisky, to maintain live contact.

==

Still would! Frequent visits - even just to shake hands - by the Soviet plenipotentiary to the British minister were worth a lot for the British! After all, not only policemen and porters, but also agents of the Abwehr were watching the front door of the Foreign Office. And the chief of the Abwehr, Admiral Canaris, could not be fed bread if he was given the opportunity to put reliable materials on the Fuhrer's table about the suspicious de diplomatic activity of these *insidious* Russians in London. Canaris needed one thing in relations between the USSR and the Reich - discord.

Eden invited Maisky, as if playing along with the admiral, and finally said:

- In the matter of improving Soviet-British relations, I count on the support of Cripps.

So, Eden sought to ensure that Cripps was making such progress in "improving" Soviet-British relations as would be prickly in the eyes of the Germans. After all, despite the bright light of the lamps on the tables and the cheerful look, the affairs of the proud Britons were not going well. On January 15, 1941, US Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau announced that before January 1, 1941, Britain had paid and then received from the United States war

materials in the amount of 331,750 thousand pounds sterling. It was huge money! The population in the metropolis then amounted to approximately 47 million, that is, from one average English soul, the war had already torn off seven pounds, while the content of pure gold in pound sterling w

gram at 1929 parity. In 1939, the pound was worth 53.8 percent of the gold parity. Taking into account the last unfortunate circumstance, about 28 grams of gold accounted for one person. From a family of four - already 112 grams. 112 grams of pure gold from the family! This is how much, by the beginning

of 1941, Winston Churchill and his war cost that ordinary Englishman, in whose devoted service Sir Winston assured the nation ... But the war for England had not really begun yet!

Y-yes ...

Further - more ... Since January 18, 1941, all men and women aged 16 to 60 years old were mandatory drafted into air defense units along with participation in fire protection. And on January 21, 1941, British Minister of Labor Ernest Bevin announced a program of forced recruitment of men and women into the industry.

So, a cool "democracy" was spinning in the British Isles ... But Churchill, exactly two months before that - on November 21, 1940 - had the opportunity to flourish with might and main at the opening of a new session of the House of Commons: - We are often called upon to

make a declaration about our goals in the war ... But actions speak for themselves better than words. Today, as we open a new session of Parliament, we proclaim our deep and sincere determination to keep alive and active, even under enemy fire, those parliamentary institutions which have served us so well, which were founded and erected by the wisdom and civic virtues of our ancestors, and which proved that they are the most flexible institutions for ensuring legitimate and permanent change and progress... Opening the gates to the future... Well, and so on...



That is, the English people and other peoples of Europe had to endure hardships, shedding sweat, blood and tears, in order to

Sir Winston and his ilk continued to have the unrestricted right to revel in high-flown Parliamentary chatter. However, there was in Churchill's speech something more substantial and specific. At the end he said this:

"Until now, the war has been fought between a heavily armed Germany and a quarter or half armed British Empire ... With confidence and hope I wait for the hour when the arsenals, training camps and science of the New World and the British Empire will give us that material superiority, which in combination with the devotion of steadfast hearts will surely bring victory and liberation to mankind.

==

At that time, nuclear work was already gaining momentum in the New World, that is, in the USA, and the future Manhattan Special Engineering District for the development of the Bomb loomed on the horizon. In England itself, in March 1940, two Jewish emigrants from continental Europe, Peierls and Frisch, prepared a three-page memorandum "On the creation of a "superbomb" based on a nuclear chain reaction in uranium." America was still playing at isolationism, at neutrality; and

Churchill was already announcing from the parliamentary rostrum about the hour when the New World would again, like more than twenty years ago, come to the Old, in order to "free" it "from the Teutons", and at the same time from excess supplies

gold and independence...

Like this.

What about the

aims of the war? Well, the Anglo-Saxons will still make a declaration on the aims of the war - we will see it with you, my dear reader!

Ivan Maisky, two days before the onset of 1941 - December 29, 1940 - saw the aging patriarch

"Sacred Parliamentary Democracy" by Lloyd George. He told Maisky that he could hardly resist Churchill's insistent request to take the post of ambassador to Washington. - But, Mr. Maisky, our ambassador

to the States must talk almost twenty-four hours a day ... The Yankees love to "talk" ... Every senator, banker, congressman, businessman, major journalist and others definitely want to see an ambassador. Refuse to take on enemies. To to have a minute of rest... And I, Mr. Maisky, am almost seventy

eight years...

"So that's why Halifax went to Washington?" — semi-questioningly," Maisky remarked semi-assertingly.

- Yes! He strongly resisted, and his wife was furious - she's a lady-in-waiting to Her Majesty... The court also objected, but...

"I was at Eden's the day before yesterday," the Russian plenipotentiary reported, and Lloyd George readily responded: "I

very much approve of this appointment!" I am sure that Eden is striving to improve relations with you, and Churchill wants the same, but to a certain extent ... He wants to win the war without the USSR, so as not to pay you too much later ... He wants to defeat Hitlerism by purely capitalist methods, that is, by military means...

==

Maisky listened to all this with ears wide open, as he always did when the Germans were scolded. How could he move away from the school of Meer "Litvinov"?! And Lloyd

George continued: "England could win in the true sense of the word if, in the course of the war, she threw off her capitalist skin like a snake and turned, in essence, into a socialist country, but I don't count on such a turn ...

Here Maisky would have caught the long-maned, gray-haired "lion" at his word and suggested: "Would you like to express this idea publicly, sir, in parliament, in the press?" Like, is there much use in the fact that

you eye to eye convince the ambassador of a socialist power of the advantages of socialism ...
If Maisky had proposed something like

that, it would immediately become clear that Lloyd George was just casting a shadow
on an already foggy London day and driving a psychological wedge between the USSR and
the Reich. However, Maisky remained silent, and the "lion" led on:

But I don't believe in a German victory either. And thus, the possibilities of a compromise
world seem to be looming. But not now! Now Hitler would break such a price that we are not
ready to pay ... - And how then? Maisky asked anyway. "I think Germany must first be
exhausted and weakened enough to accept a reasonable peace. - In the
spirit of the new Versailles? - Oh no! I am against his new rehearsal... - And what picture
is drawn to you, Sir David, for the forty-first year? "About
that," Lloyd George said eagerly. -
Germany will prepare during the winter and will prepare
for a tremendous blow against England at sea and in the air, as well as for an invasion

attempt - maybe in the spring. However, Hitler cannot beat us... Maisky listened attentively,
and the "lion" prophesied: "If the test of strength in 1941 turns out to be

next winter, conditions may be created for the conclusion of peace ... - Even so? - Yes!
And then the
USSR and the USA could play a role
powerful intermediaries.



So, Lloyd George's "recipe" for the Russians was this: not to be very friendly with the
Fuhrer, be friends with Eden and prepare to participate in a moderate solemn flogging of a
weakened Germany.

"However," the gray-haired Briton concluded, "it's very difficult to make plans for such a
long term, by today's standards..."

new moments and factors will emerge that by the end of the forty-first year will completely change the situation.

* * *

WHAT SPECIFICALLY Lloyd George had in mind, it was difficult to guess. Perhaps he secretly hoped for an English atomic "superbomb" - its development had already begun. Or perhaps he was counting on a break between Hitler and Stalin, or ...

However, there were quite a few of these "possibles". But the hardened parliamentary either a lion or a wolf was right about one thing: in the forty-first year, the most unexpected factors could "surface" on the surface of world politics. The day

before Eden's conversation with Maisky, Eden's Italian colleague, Galeazzo Ciano, received Maisky's Roman colleague, Nikolai Gorelkin, Plenipotentiary Representative of the USSR in Italy. And also on his own initiative... Ciano immediately

took the bull by the horns: "The Duce wants to establish closer relations between Italy and the Soviet Union, both in the economic and political fields. There are no disputed issues between our countries, borders do not touch, and internal issues cannot be any obstacle. Gorelkin nodded in agreement.

"Our treaty of 1933 on friendship, non-aggression and neutrality remains in force, but it would be desirable, Signor Gorelkin, to revise it in the spirit of the present situation, in the spirit of new interests...

Gorelkin nodded here too, but preferred to clarify what he meant. Ciano explained: - We are

ready to recognize your new borders, your rights in the Black Sea and in Asia, and even your interests in the Balkans. Our interests are rights in the Mediterranean... These are our proposals, Mr. Ambassador, and what you propose will be seen...

Ciano chuckled, grinned, smiled broadly, and confessed: "You, Mr. Ambassador, are a party man. I am also a party and statesman, and personally I want to work things out with the communist state, rather than with ... - here the minister took on a contemptuous tone, - democratic, where everyone pulls where he wants

I want to ... This is my personal opinion, but in international affairs I prefer to deal with the communist government. Communist Gorelkin had nothing to argue with, especially since

The minister was already finishing, saying in the end:

- Negotiations on this issue can be held either in Moscow between Herr Molotov and Ambassador Rosso, or here between you and me.

Returning to his room, Gorelkin immediately went to the embassy's cryptographer. And Stalin, reading the cipher of the plenipotentiary from Rome, which came with a stamp: ***“Out of turn. Especially important. Strictly secret,***” said Molotov: “That’s it,

Vyacheslav ... It looks like the ice has broken ... The Duce also wants to us to be friends in a new way.

Molotov did not allow himself familiarity with Stalin, however this time he could not resist and, not without sarcasm in his voice, asked: -

So, maybe we should invite Mussolini to Brest? Why go to Brest? Stalin retorted quite seriously. - We have Yalta for this ...

- So Yalta right away? - again Molotov could not resist. - Not right away ... For now, talk to Rosso here in Moscow, - Stalin reassured Molotov.

BUT ALSO, before Rosso, Molotov had a conversation with the Japanese ambassador Tatekawa. On the eve of December 27, 1940, one of the Molotov deputies, Solomon Lozovsky, had a long and difficult conversation with him ... The topics of their conversation were tedious, but, alas, so far inevitable in business with the Japanese: border conflicts; Japanese fishing schooners in our territorial waters; non-payments of the Japanese shipbuilding company Matsuo Dockyard, which, back in 1936, having received from us an advance of one and a half million yen for the construction of three ships, terminated the contract in March 1938 without returning any penalty, interest, or exchange rate difference, or even an advance payment .

Now Molotov was faced with an equally boring task - to bicker with the Japanese about the long-suffering fishing

conventions: quotas, yen, interest, the rate of the State Bank and rent payments ... They also talked about the "defaulter" Matsuo ... "I know

Mr. Matsuo personally," Tatekawa shrugged his shoulders, "and he is not the kind of person to engage in non-payment of the amounts taken ... I think he himself Matsuo has nothing to do with it - now Kawaminami has become the head of the company, it seems that he is delaying the advance ...

- The Soviet side is dealing with the firm Matsuo Dokyard and judges the state of affairs by the facts," Molotov replied dryly.

At that, Tatekawa bowed. And the "Japanese" part of the diplomatic year of 1940 did not end in the best spirit for both powers ... However, the new, 41st year could bring quite positive changes.

However, socialist Russia lived not only with big things in the outside world ... There were enough worries and smaller ones, but pleasant worries ... In December 1940, People's Commissar for Foreign Trade Anastas Mikoyan and Jan Orsaga - authorized by the President of Slovakia - signed in Moscow the Treaty on Trade and Shipping between the USSR and Slovak Republic. At the same time, in December, a cipher from the Soviet plenipotentiary in Bulgaria came from Sofia about the proposals of the Bulgarian government on trade with the USSR for 1941. The Bulgarian lev weighed a little more than one hundredth of a gram of gold, and in dollars the entire mutual turnover was approximately 19 million. But it was **a peaceful** exchange for peaceful purposes. And it was more expensive than gold. And in February 1941,

Soviet Russia concluded a trade agreement with the Swiss Confederation. The mountainous republic was supposed to supply us with machine tools, electrical equipment, turbines, generators, electric motors, steam boilers, hydraulic presses, precision instruments in exchange for grain, timber, petroleum products, cotton, manganese and chromium ore ... Somewhere battles thundered, houses collapsed under bombs and their inhabitants died, somewhere

someone plotted new wars in the name of new profits, and life took its toll... Both the planet and people wanted to live on it - creating, creating, building and enjoying the fruits of their labor, referred to in the official language of contracts "products of soil and industry originating in the territory of the High Contracting Parties."

* * *

ON JANUARY 9, 1941, at the Berghof, the Fuhrer held a meeting with Commander-in-Chief of the Ground Forces Brauchitsch. Present were the Chief of Staff of the High Command of the Armed Forces, Keitel, the Chief of Staff of the Operational Command of the Warlimont Design Bureau, and the newly appointed 1st Chief Quartermaster of the General Staff of the Ground Forces, fifty-year-old Friedrich Paulus and the head of the Operations Department, fifty-three-year-old Colonel Adolf Heusinger. The chief of the last two, Halder, was on vacation until January 15, and Paulus represented him at the meeting. From the Luftwaffe was the Chief of the General Staff of the Air Force, Hans Jeschonnek. From the Navy - Chief of the Main Naval Staff of the High Command of the Naval Forces Otto Schniewind. The

meeting began at 12:15 pm. - Lord! the Fuhrer addressed the generals. "Today we have to discuss a wide range of issues. Let's start with Operation Marita... Marita is support for the Duce in Greece... Brauchitsch, getting up from his seat, said that in order to

succeed in Greece, the troops allocated under this plan

would not be able to take part in the planned Eastern operation. In addition, it is planned to send troops to Bulgaria.

"If we also enter Bulgaria, then the Russians may intervene," Hitler said thoughtfully. "But I think that soon it will be possible to use the formations intended for cover from Turkey. The Fuhrer had in mind the negotiations with the Turks, who are less than

six months later ended with the signing of the German-Turkish treaty.

"So, we are conducting Operation Marita, gentlemen," he summed up at the end of the discussion. What about Felix? The Felix plan involved the capture of

Gibraltar and landings on the Spanish Canary Islands and the Portuguese Cape Verde Islands ... In the situation in which Germany found itself, such actions would have been decidedly a gamble, especially since the Fuhrer had already understood that the question of using Spain as an ally had so far disappeared. And he completely canceled the Felix plan, then announcing a break.

The continuation followed at 14:45. Now in the hall was both Ribbentrop and the Fuhrer began by assessing the general situation:

- Lord! The British overestimate their capabilities. Germany produces more steel than England and France combined. The same is with aluminum... That is, our economic potential is great... The military one is even more so... The generals have heard this

more than once, and now they were simply silent. So it is so, but Britain remains Britain, the sun does not set over it as before, and the Reich has already stretched its forces from cold Narvik to hot Libya and from the English Channel to ... Oh, almost to the

Bosphorus ... Far away! And the Fuhrer

continued: - Norway

is secured ... France hesitates, they want the end of the war, but part of the population is ready for resistance. Our preparations for Operation Attila - the Fuhrer meant the plan for the complete occupation of France, including the territories controlled by the government in Vichy - did not go unnoticed ...

The generals listened already with great attention - the French really bothered. Their military potential on the continent was zero, but the colonies... French North Africa... Syria...

And the Fuhrer

continued: - Spain is indecisive It is not very position... promising, but we must try again to induce Spain to enter the war ... Remembering the

caudillo, the Fuhrer grimaced. And just like that, without driving away from faces of skepticism, he turned to African affairs:

- The war in Africa does not affect us much ... Even if we lose North Africa, then only the situation that existed before June 25 last year will be restored. However, a collapse in Africa could become an internal national catastrophe for Italy... And we must keep it as an ally... Therefore, we need to help the Italians with equipment and send to Italy such a unit that would have the missing types of weapons...

The Fuhrer looked around at the blue eyes present and finished:

- The connection must be mobile and have sufficient striking power ...

After a pause, he began again: -

And now - about the Slavs ... First - the Balkans ... Yugoslavia leaves all questions open, only Romania is truly friendly to us. Bulgaria is loyal... But Tsar Boris is smart and too cautious - he is afraid of losing his throne... The main thing is Russia...

And an atmosphere of genuine interest was immediately established in the hall ... Russia both encouraged and frightened ... Russia was the most important value, but still not clarified ...

- Until recently, America and Russia were the hope of England ... - the Fuhrer seemed to say what had already been said more than once, but a new note was also heard here. And it cut through more

and more: - But after my meeting with Stalin in Brest, I do not exclude the emergence of a new situation - Russia can get out of the Anglo-Saxon combinations. And the Fuhrer

explained: - There

is a duality here ... Stalin is smart and cunning. He keeps increasing his demands. At the same time, from the point of view of Russian ideology, the victory of Germany is unacceptable ... But is the defeat of Germany beneficial to Russia from a geopolitical point of view? Hitler asked this

question to himself and began to answer it himself, arguing on the go: "Russians don't think in terms

of geopolitics — they are captives of purely class ideas... However, in Brest, Stalin unexpectedly showed himself to be a smart geopolitician... And this is encouraging... Such generals never heard from the Fuhrer before. And the impression

from what he heard was so strong and obvious that the Fuhrer considered it necessary to cool the enthusiasm that arose somewhat:

- Lord! I'm just making an assumption ... But the Barbarossa plan must continue to be worked out. In two years England will have forty divisions and America will be armed to the teeth. And this may encourage Russia to move closer to them. Allow this

it is forbidden...

The Fuhrer spoke calmly before that, but now, more and more excited from the thoughts that overwhelmed him constantly, already hotly stated:

- The British are not fools ... If they do not see any prospect, they will stop fighting ... The next way out is to deprive them of Russian hope. But we have two methods for this: either defeat Russia and then England will surrender, or we will continue the war with her under the most favorable conditions. Or ... - the Fuhrer interrupted and finished again without expression: - Or get Russia to join the "axis" - at first, at least politically, but also economically ... And then England can also stop the fight ... and the development of Barbarossa The meeting ended, continued. On January the concentration of troops 31, 1941, an updated directive on was prepared, where it was said:

“In the event that Russia changes its current attitude towards Germany, as a precautionary measure, extensive preparatory measures should be taken that would make it possible to defeat Soviet Russia in a fleeting campaign even before the war against England is over ...”

This ended January. The forty-first year began its second month - frosty in Russia, hot in Africa ... So, February began.

ONE of the outcomes of the January 9 meeting was the dispatch of the Africa Expeditionary Force under the command of Lieutenant General Erwin Rommel to Libya. On February 1, 1941,

Brauchitsch brought General Funk to Hitler, returned from Tripolitania. Hitler

was brief: - What

are your impressions, General? -

The most unfavorable, my Fuhrer! Italians don't have will, no ability to resist. - Our support can rectify the situation?

- Yes, if a unit capable of
take offensive action. The English are now weakened.

This assessment coincided with the opinion of Hitler. It was time to make decisions ... Although the Führer assessed the African theater as insignificant, it could potentially become very important. Success in Egypt and further advance towards Iraq could give the "Axis" the oil of the Middle East. And the capture of Suez would mean control of such an important strategic communication that ...

In a word, Rommel could do a lot in Africa - if he had enough strength and means for it ... He had no energy and talent ... In 1941, the general was in his fiftieth year, and he received his first combat experience back in the First World War, moreover - brilliant experience. The best confirmation of this was the Iron Crosses of the 1st and 2nd classes and the main German order with the French name "Pour le Merite" ... In 1937, Rommel

wrote the book "The Infantry Advances", which attracted the attention of Hitler, and soon became the commander of the Führer's escort battalion. In the Polish campaign, Rommel was the commandant of the field headquarters and Hitler's personal train. And in the French campaign, Rommel's 7th Panzer Division went to Cherbourg with huge trophies, and its commander received the Knight's Cross. Now he was faced

with an African epic. The Italians in Africa

had a hard time. On January 19, 1941, British forces launched major operations against them in Eritrea and Ethiopia. They also advanced in Libya: on January 22, Tobruk was taken, on February 7, the port of Benghazi was captured - the decisive position of the East Libyan Front. On February 9, the British tanks, advancing from Benghazi, had already approached the borders of Tripolitania.

The Germans had to hurry. And on January 14, 1941, the British Admiralty announced the first attack by German dive bombers on British warships in the Mediterranean. On February 7, Rommel was received by Brauchitsch and Halder. The commander-in-chief of the ground forces and the chief of the General Staff set the main task for the commander of the German ground forces in Libya, who was flying to Africa, to ensure that Graziani retreated to Tripoli in a combat-ready state.

Soon Rommel was already in Tripoli and immediately disagreed with Graziani in his views on what should be done. The Italians were inclined to defend themselves, but Rommel saw this as a path to collapse and wanted to launch an offensive as soon as

possible. - Lord! he urged the Italian generals. - Necessary preempt General Wavell in bringing up his forces...

- By what means? Graziani asked him despondently. — Cash and those who will soon be here! They are only enough for defense. Then I will

act independently, relying only on myself,” the future “Desert Fox” declared angrily and in every possible way forced the transfer of his troops, primarily the 5th light infantry division, reinforced by units of the 3rd tank division.

And in MOSCOW, Stalin closely followed the situation - it took on an increasingly interesting look. Stalin understood all of Eden's tricks in London correctly, as well as the Moscow tricks of the British Ambassador Cripps, but for the time being he preferred to take a strategic pause. And this fact also did not go unnoticed in Berlin and London.

Cripps besieged Molotov's first deputy in the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, Andrei Vyshinsky, with a request to find out if Eden could come to Moscow to meet with Stalin. Vyshinsky did not give a negative answer, but referred to Comrade Stalin's extreme workload in connection with the forthcoming session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR.

Cripps did not give up ... And having received him once again, on February 25, 1941, Andrei Yanuarievich

suddenly said: - Mr. Cripps, today I can tell you the answer Soviet government... The

Englishman tensed in anticipation, and Vyshinsky, obviously not without pleasure, for he was clever, waited a moment and said:

— The Soviet government considers that the time has not yet come for settling big questions by way of a meeting between Mr. Eden and the leaders of the USSR.

Cripps twitched, he wanted to say something, but Vyshinsky did not give him this and finished:

- Especially since such a meeting is not politically prepared ... Cripps restrained himself - he, after all, represented the homeland of gentlemen - and thanked for the quick answer, and then added: - Your words "now is not the time yet" give me reason to think that such a time can come in the future. Did I understand you correctly? Vyshinsky, elegant as always, impeccably dressed and impeccably brought

up, replied with restraint that his answer was clear enough and that, generally speaking, such a time could not be ruled out sometime in the future. "But it's hard to see into the future," he reminded her. Cripps pondered and, deep in thought, repeated:

- Yes, it is really difficult ... Then he thanked again for the message and left. This whole dialogue took no more than seven minutes.

From FEBRUARY 15 TO 20, 1941, the XVIII All-Union Conference of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks was held in Moscow ... Nikolai Voznesensky, chairman of the State Planning Committee, made a report on "The economic results of 1940 and the plan for the development of the national economy of the USSR for 1941".

Pravda published the Resolution of the Conference on February 19. Its first section was called "Successes and Shortcomings in the Work of Industry and Transport". Well, there were enough successes, but also shortcomings ... Coal mining, the production of special grade steels and high-quality rolled products, copper and aluminum increased. Russia has mastered the production of new complex machines and machine tools. And the defense industries grew at a faster pace. Pravda wrote:

"As a result of the success in the development of new technology and the growth of the defense industry, the technical equipment of the Red Army and the Military

of the Marine Fleet with the latest types and types of modern weapons.

The second section of the resolution was devoted to an analysis of the causes of the shortcomings... Briefly, they could all be reduced to one thing: racial laziness, laxity and "maybe" combined with superficiality and vulgar theft.

All this was, alas, in abundance. But after all, there was an abundance of something else - faith in oneself and in the future, strength for life and struggle, determination to live and fight.

1941 began - the penultimate year in the third five-year plan. Her last year was 1942. But before that it was necessary live.

February was coming to an end... Winter was coming

to an end. And the hot winter was preparing to turn into an even hotter spring.

Chapter 2

Yes, the winter of the 41st ended ... And the spring promised to be stormy during in all respects...

Hitler has not yet made any final decision on Russia. And conflicting information came from Moscow ... At the end of last year, the Russians held a series of high military conferences, and their true meaning has so far eluded understanding. What was it - ordinary defense work or working out plans for our own preventive strike on the Reich?

Hitler did not have an answer to this question ... So the invisible work on the Barbarossa plan continued, and apparently the Wehrmacht, Luftwaffe and fleet were still preparing for the invasion of the British Isles. A lot of time and effort was now occupied by African affairs. And behind the new need to control almost all of Europe were new potential theaters of war.

In the meantime, while the Germans were developing plans for future operations, in Russia, at the training camps of the highest command staff, they studied the experience of their operations of the recent past. A little over a month before Molotov's trip to Berlin, on October 7, 1940, a meeting of representatives of the Main Naval Staff, Naval Aviation and the Naval Academy was held in Leningrad. People's Commissar of the Navy Nikolai Kuznetsov and Chief of the Main Naval Staff Lev Galler remained in Moscow, because on October 9 Stalin summoned both to his place in the Kremlin, so the meeting was opened by First Deputy People's Commissar Admiral Ivan Isakov. In his opening speech, he stated:

"Today we have a formed coalition along the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo axis, on the one hand, and an unformed, but actually existing coalition, England-USA, on the other.

A week-long naval debate began - there were enough pressing problems and questions. However, to one of the questions he asked himself: "Against whom, when, where and how do we intend to fight?" Isakov did not answer. And these words, having excited the naval thought, hung in the air, gray with strong admiral tobacco.

And after the Berlin visit of Molotov and the Brest meeting of the Fuhrer and Stalin on December 2, 1940, the Gathering of commanders of fleets and flotillas began in Moscow with a speech by People's Commissar of the Navy Kuznetsov.

Like Isakov, Kuznetsov did not give a direct answer to his own question, "Whom should we study?". True, he said this:

"I don't undertake to define and indicate the "name", but, as a rule, of the two likely opponents, the closest, neighboring one is more likely ... Kuznetsov could be

understood ... Pacts - pacts, Brest - Brest, and he is not a politician . And in Spain he fought, after all, with the Germans ... But then what happened? "Two probable" are England and Germany... "Nearest, neighboring..." is Germany. But it was an officially friendly power... So what did the people's commissar mean? From all this, the admirals had a desire to immediately grab the admiral's cup - to clear their brains. Moreover, already "towards the end", at an extended meeting of the Main Military Council after the Gathering, Kuznetsov said: "When the Germans occupied Holland, there were photos in the magazines, like

The mayor of Rotterdam presented the keys to the city to a German general...

The People's Commissar looked around the attentively listening audience with a sedentary gaze of the "sea wolf" and continued: - If

we apply this to our experience, then no matter what enemy comes to us, no matter what enemy decides to attack our cities, I am convinced that the situation will not be the same as in Rotterdam. No one will carry the keys towards you, comrades!

Such speeches made one think, but they did not bring clarity - just as the Meeting of the top leadership of the Red Army, which was held from December 23 to 31, 1940, by People's Commissar of Defense Tymoshenko, did not introduce it either. The main report was made by Chief of the General Staff Kirill Meretskoy. Unlike the navy,

neither Tymoshenko nor Meretskoy even stuttered about the nationality of a potential enemy. But after the meeting, Tymoshenko held two bilateral operational-strategic games on the maps, where, of course, Soviet troops acted as the "Eastern", but the Germans were easily guessed in the "Western" attacking them ...

I mean, the "Western", concentrating up to 120 infantry divisions in the Sedlec-Lublin area, as well as the bulk of tanks and aircraft, on July 15, 1941, made the main attack in the direction of Kiev, and from East Prussia an auxiliary strike was delivered by a grouping of up to 60 divisions. All these "card games" did not escape Hitler's attention. As, however,
from the attention of Stalin.

STALIN did not appear at any of the meetings. He was not seen either by the navy or by the army. However, he carefully read the reports and transcripts. On January 2, 1941, he spoke with Timoshenko and Budyonny, and then received Meretskov, Zhukov and with them - a good dozen generals, participants in the New Year's gathering

top command staff.

Stalin also spoke with Zhdanov - at the Big Naval Assembly, he sat next to the Naval People's Commissar and not as a member of the Politburo, but as a member of the Main Military Council of the Navy. — Well,

Andrey Andreyevich, what is your impression? "Dual, Comrade Stalin," Zhdanov answered honestly. - Why? - On the one hand, you listen and rejoice for the people - the Soviet government raised excellent shoots, and gave them weapons and knowledge ... - This is - on the one hand ... - nodded, agreeing, Stalin. - And on the

other? "But on the other hand, there is a lot of sloppiness and formalism ... If we acted like

this in industry, then we would not have completed any five-year plans ... Stalin sighed: - I read the transcripts of the Timoshenko meeting, and the impression is the same ... Interesting things come

out of Meretskov's

report things. According to the regulations developed by our former "military geniuses" like Tukhachevsky - Stalin pronounced this name bitterly - the battle formations of the infantry are such that from a seventeen thousandth division to attack

320 fighters in the strike group and 320 in the restraining group are marching along the main direction

of the breakthrough. Zhdanov quickly figured out in his mind: - How is it possible - for one "bayonet" fighting there are almost thirty "bayonets" in the second echelon and in the rear? "Twenty-six," Stalin

clarified. Zhdanov, not believing his ears, asked: - And the Germans? - The Germans go into the first attack at once a third! — Third? - It happens, Andrey Andreevich, and more ... And Stalin admitted: - I did not think that things were so bad with us ... After the Finnish

we seem to have discussed everything, but, as it turns out, not everything ...

Both fell into thought, then Zhdanov suddenly chuckled mirthlessly and said: - Recently,

an old article by Tukhachevsky caught my eye ... - So what? - It turns out

that he considered the most promising means of communication in modern warfare, you know what? Zhdanov paused. - Dogs ... - Yes, theorist, - Stalin added

an unprintable bend and also smiled sadly, remembering his own ... Then he also told - what remembered:

- When the first five-year plan began, Uborevich became the head of armaments, and from the thirty-second year we replaced him with Tukhachevsky ... And he immediately offered to load the industry with an order for one hundred thousand light tanks - and even without radio communications. - Hoping for dogs? Zhdanov laughed. - Probably ... So to speak: three tankers plus one dog - combat vehicle crew...

- And how did it all end, Comrade Stalin? - Well, then I reasoned with him ... They say, to us, Comrade Tukhachevsky, so far, at least give a hundred thousand tractors to Russia - and that's good ...

Zhdanov laughed again, then grew serious, and frowning, he said:

- It turns out strange ... In the ten years since the beginning of industrialization, we have created new defense design bureaus and research institutes ... We have built factories, raised new cadres of industrial organizers, young cadres of scientists, engineers, technicians...

Stalin listened, waiting to see how his interlocutor would end, but he was already speaking

angrily: "But Tukhachevsky and his accomplices could only create an anti-Stalinist Trotskyist conspiracy ... And what turns out? The country as a whole, its industry, its science and technology are ready to "keep the mark" at a high level - already now, in the coming 1941 ... Is our army ready?

Zhdanov's QUESTION hit, as they say, "to the point" ... In 1941, the army was not ready for war, neither professionally, nor ideologically, nor technically. A lot of things had an effect here ... The mass and not yet outlived slave psychology, which the Bolsheviks inherited from the three-hundred-year reign of the Romanov dynasty, and the Romanovs - from the three-hundred-year Tatar-Mongol yoke ... Inescapable racial laziness is another legacy of the three-hundred-year rule of the august house of the Romanovs, as well as the third such legacy - weak scientific and technical development ...

The Tukhachevskys also spoiled a lot ... The former chief of armaments of the Red Army was shot on June 12, 1937. And four months later, on October 13, 1937, the Kharkov Plant No. 183 received the tactical and technical requirements for the design of a new medium tank, which soon turned into the famous "thirty-four" ...

At the end of 1938, the history of the famous Klim Voroshilov heavy tank began at the Kirov Plant in Leningrad ... And at the same time, Stalin's new cadres began to quickly correct the failures in equipping military aviation - new machines by Yakovlev, Petlyakov, Ilyushin, Mikoyan and Gurevich, Lavochkin were being prepared for the series with Gorbunov and Gudkov...

In Brest, Stalin took the risk of showing Hitler the best... But by 1941 this best was still not enough... It took at least a year to equip the new army. One

thousand nine hundred and forty
one. Stalin told Zhdanov about this:

"We, Andrei Andreevich, would have at least another year without a war ... And it would be better - and without it at all ...

"Well, Comrade Stalin," Zhdanov immediately responded, "if our Brest guest does not let you down ...

- Yes, that's it - in Poland, his troops are accumulating ... He says that he is taking the British out of the blow.

- And in fact? - So

far, something definite, Andrey Andreevich, to say difficult ... But he will not wage war on two fronts ...

Stalin's THOUGHT was correct, reasonable and sound. However, the Golden Elite of the world had to interrupt the rapprochement between Berlin and Moscow, poisoning the consciousness, first of all, of Hitler ... The new, forty-first year was not to be another year of the Russian-German peace, but the first year of the Russian-

German war. The simplest solution was to convince Hitler of the strength of England and the weakness of Russia. If, moreover, you give him the impression that Stalin is only waiting for the strengthening of Russia in order to strike at the war-burdened Reich on his own or in a bloc with the Anglo-Saxons, then ... Then you could rub your hands and wait until - as the Yankees dreamed - the last Russian soldier pierces with a bayonet the last German himself will fall from his automatic bullet ... But in Washington, this was not only a dream. This was what was being prepared, which was discussed in February 1941 in the cozy office of one of the cozy Washington mansions.

The host's name was Allen Dulles, and his elder brother John Foster Dulles and William Donovan were guests, a personality of versatile talents. Initially - a lawyer, like the Dulles brothers, now - a confidant of President Roosevelt in particular

delicate affairs, freshly minted intelligence general. However, even before receiving the formal general rank, Donovan was often called "general". There was also another

guest here - a big one, almost two meters tall, well-fed, blue-eyed brunette with a youthful appearance ...

All four sat comfortably in armchairs, the owner smoked his pipe, and the guests preferred cigars ... And the clouds of smoke gradually filling the room looked appropriate and natural in this place - after all, each of the four was a master of throwing dust and smoke into his eyes and putting up political "smoke screens". ". He started the conversation,

contrary to the rules of good manners, not the owner, but the guest - Allen's older brother John ... However, in his brother's house he was his own, so there was no need to reproach him for tactlessness.

"Gentlemen," John Foster looked around the other three with a heavy look, "I asked you to gather here in order to tell you the most unpleasant news ...

The listeners were silent - their endurance had long been tempered in many troubles, and the speaker

explained: "Things in Europe are not going at all as we planned ... Again, no one even moved in their chairs, but the gleam in their eyes intensified. And Dulles Sr.

continued: - Stalin did something that we did not allow ... Here Donovan considered it possible to throw a remark: - Yes, it seems that the second Brest in 1940 turned out to be more successful for the Bolsheviks than the first,

in 1918 ... - Alas, yes," Dulles Sr. confirmed. "And we need to take new steps... That is why, gentlemen, we have gathered here... Influential friends asked General Donovan and me," here Dulles bowed towards the general's chair, "to discuss the current situation with you and outline ways to rectify it in the right direction..."

And then the glances of those present unanimously turned to the armchair, noticeably slumped under the overweight carcass of the giant guest. But before we start listening to him, it doesn't hurt to get to know his interlocutors better, and even with him ...

The Dulles BROTHERS came from a circle of trusted servants of the Golden Elite. True, the Dulles clan itself was not part of this elite - for this, the members of the clan had too modest (by the standards of the elite, of course) bank accounts. However, the business qualities of the Dulles' lawyers provided them with a quite decent status in the USA. The brothers were grandchildren of John Watson Dulles, Secretary of State under President Harrison, and nephews of Secretary of State Lansing under President Woodrow Wilson.

Uncle - also a lawyer - was a staunch Russophobe, actively defended the rights of the Yankees to robbery in the Russian seal trades before the First World War, and after it he no less actively supported the intervention against the Bolsheviks, was considered an expert in international law, was one of the trustees

of the Carnegie Endowment. The nephews, the sons of a Presbyterian minister, John Foster, born in 1888, and Allen Welsh, born in 1893, both graduates of Princeton University, moved in the same circle of interests, persons, ideas and deeds as his uncle. Jurisprudence, foreign policy, connections with those in power and money, and loyal service to them - that's what made up their life already from a young age. John Foster, by the way, also advanced, like his uncle, to the trustees, becoming chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Rockefeller Foundation ... He also participated, by the way, in drawing up the Dawes Plan - the doctrine of the economic subordination of Germany and Europe

to the United States after the First World War. From the second half of the 1920s, the brothers first came to Wallstreet's largest law firm Sullivan and Cromwell (Sullivan and Cromwell), and soon headed it. The firm was associated with the American government and European banks, with the "kings" of the economy and just with the kings. Among her influential clients scattered all over the world was Winston Churchill - a friend of the Yankees, the son of an American and the future military prime minister of Britain ... That is, the Dulles company and its patrons had a very definite look - cosmopolitan, "elite gold" ...

William Joseph Donovan was five years older than the elder Dulles. In World War I, he fought on the Western Front, first in the 69th Fighting Irish Regiment, then commanded the 165th

regiment, was wounded three times and earned the Medal of Honor, the Purple Heart, the Legion of Honor rosette, the Order of the British Empire, several more medals and crosses, and also the nickname "Wild Bill" (Wild Bill). During the Russian Civil War, Donovan at one time worked as a US Army liaison officer under Admiral Kolchak. Kolchak came to the attention of the Anglo-Saxons even before 1914, during the war, with the help of the British, he became the commander of the Black Sea Fleet, and in the summer of 1917 the Yankees became interested in him. In the autumn of 1918, they transported the admiral to Siberia, but Kolchak did not justify his hopes - as, indeed, did the rest of the gold and white collars of the Golden International. Nevertheless, Donovan received some experience in Russian affairs under Kolchak. Then Bill returned to the States,

rose to the post of Deputy Attorney General of the United States, then "suddenly" went to the private bar, became his own man on Wall Street and became a millionaire.

In the 1930s, this experienced and active emissary of the Golden International traveled a lot around the world in an allegedly "private manner" - driven by alleged curiosity. He was in Ethiopia during its capture by Mussolini, in Spain during the civil war, and reached more distant, but no less hot spots.

At the beginning of the presidency of the FDR - Franklin Delano Roosevelt - Donovan proved himself a stubborn opponent of his "New Deal". And already at the end of the 30s, Roosevelt sent Donovan as an ambassador for special assignments on a long trip to Europe and the Middle East.

Immediately after the fall of France, after the English disaster at Dunkirk - in July 1940, Donovan appears in London. It was necessary to cheer up the discouraged islanders, support an old acquaintance - Churchill and make new acquaintances in order to continue the war. The Yankees did not want and could not allow peace between the British and the Germans, and Wild Bill tried with might and main - as Churchill wrote to Roosevelt: "Donovan, wherever he appeared, brought a living fresh stream." It was

Donovan who recommended Roosevelt to exchange 50 obsolete American destroyers for the lease of British bases in

Western Atlantic and Caribbean. And the fact that this violated the status of the United States as a neutral power did not bother the international lawyer Donovan a little - he knew that international law is a drawbar ... Wherever the masters of the world turn, there it will unfold.

The United States was preparing for a new war, and this time the tasks looked much more serious than in the First World War. It was understandable: the Soviet Union is not the old "Race", easily subject to foreign influence, and Stalin is not Colonel Romanov. Therefore, preparations for the leadership of the war, which for America had not yet formally begun, had to be taken into their own hands as early as possible. After all, after this war, the US elite was determined to forever discard the worn-out tale of alleged "isolationism" and directly declare America's claim to lead the whole world for all time - both times of war and times of peace ... So far, this was only hinted at by one of the inscriptions on one dollar bill: "Novus ordo seclorum" ("New order for the ages"), but the time for hints was soon to end.

However, in the name of establishing the "Novus ordo", one had to work hard, and Donovan's affairs were above his throat ... At the end of the 40th year, he held a series of meetings with the director of British naval intelligence, Rear Admiral John Godfrey, and the MI6 chief himself, Sir Stuart Menzies ... And then, with the representative of British intelligence in the United States, William Stephenson, he went on a shuttle inspection trip: England, Portugal, Spain and Gibraltar, Malta, Greece, Yugoslavia, Turkey, Egypt, England again - in total, almost a round-the-world trip, about 40 thousand kilometers! As Wild Bill himself later admitted, generals and admirals, marshals and colonels, secret agents and attaches, politicians and sheikhs, kings and princes, Catholic padres, Protestant pastors and Muslim mullahs passed before his eyes in an endless succession ... He, however, why he kept silent about meetings with bankers and industrialists, but ... it's impossible to mention everything and everyone.

* * *

WHAT ABOUT the interlocutor of Donovan and the Dulles, he was of particular interest to these three, for only he was one of the four who knew the Fuhrer of Germany well. And I didn't just know him personally, but I knew him for a long time and - very, very confidentially ... Actually, in America, no one else could come close to equaling him in knowledge of both the entire top of the National Socialists and the whole interweaving of passions, motives and plans of the leadership of the Reich.

The name of this youthful, but in fact - a fifty-four-year-old native of Germany, Ernst Franz Zedgvik Hanfstaengl. He met Hitler in the early twenties and stayed by his side until the spring of 1937. "Putzi" ("Naughty") Hanfstaengl was considered in the Fuhrer's inner circle as a shirt-guy and almost a jester. Appreciated Hitler and his talent as a pianist. Hanfstaengl was two years older than Hitler, but did not make a big career in the NSDAP. However, he became a trusted person, his own ... He was, however, his own not only in the Reich, but also in some places and for some people ... Like here - for Donovan and the

Dulles brothers. Ernst's father, a wealthy antiquarian, married an American who had naturalized (that is, received citizenship) in Germany. She retained her American citizenship by birthright in the territory of "the freest country in the world." At the age of eighteen, Ernst himself went to study across the ocean, to the nursery of the American and supranational elite - Harvard. The choice was explained by the fact that the son, they say, should prepare to manage the American branch of the family business on 5th Avenue in New York, although in general, for the future art dealer, his native Munich with its old Pinakothek, relatives Italy, Paris, London. Nevertheless, the young giant and "an ardent patriot who dreams of serving the Reich" goes to study in the USA, where the Mona Lisa's smile flaunts on

soap labels.

In 1909, the university was graduated, and five years later the First World War began, which the supposedly patriot of Germany with mighty shoulders and iron health spent in the States. But in 1921, with a beautiful wife and a one-year-old son, he **suddenly** returns to Germany, subject to the will of the Yankees. Germany is begging, and Ernst has an open house in Munich, a rich estate in Uffing,

solid sums on hand and on the desktop - a research plan about the Bavarian king-philanthropist Ludwig P.

And then the blue-eyed Hanfstaengl, who masterfully performs Wagner, allegedly "takes a great interest" in the personality of the blue-eyed Hitler, who adores Wagner, introduces the future Fuhrer into the Munich salons, gives a thousand dollars (then, in fact - gold!) to purchase equipment for the party newspaper "Volkischer Beobachter" ... And soon "Putzi" - the chief of the press service of the NSDAP and the confidant of the leader of the party. On the eve of the new year, 1933, Hitler writes in the Hanfstaengl family album: "The first day of the new year. This year belongs to us. I confirm this in writing.

But four years later, the mission of the "friend of the Fuhrer" in the Reich ended - he had to urgently, under a clumsy pretext, escape back to America ... The real reason was the Fuhrer's unwillingness to continue to have a Yankee spy with him. Indeed, back in 1921, Putzi was introduced to the Nazis by the Deputy Military Attache of the US Embassy in Berlin, Captain Truman Smith, and Ernst's friend from Harvard, the embassy adviser Robbins. Both, like Hanfstaengl himself, were, of course, scouts. So all the time of his "friendship" with Hitler, "Putzi" "covered" the Fuhrer in detail, being a typical "setup", "double" ... The Nazis did not understand this right away, but they understood. And the Putzi did not very politely point to the door - the Fuhrer no longer needed overseas spies in his entourage. Now, in 1941, Hanfstaengl's son had the

rank of lieutenant in the American army, and "Putzi" was found in Washington in the rank of personal adviser to President Roosevelt. So here was the guest of Allen Dulles, on which the eyes of the rest of those present crossed.

Senior Dulles, breaking the silence, asked the giant a direct the question is - will the new year be peaceful for Russia?

"Gentlemen," Hanfstaengl did not beat around the bush, "you yourself are perfectly aware that only my sincere one can interrupt the rapid growth of the Soviets ..." here "Putzi" grinned sarcastically, "a friend from Berlin ..." "Is this real?" - I guess, yes! The Führer,"

Hanfstaengl

grinned again as he said the word, "on the one hand, he is prudent,

he is prudent and knows how to be cold-blooded, but on the other hand, he is impulsive ... Dulles Jr. nodded in confirmation ... In April 33rd, he met Hitler in Berlin, and although the meeting was the only one, the impression that Allen took out of her did not disagree with the assessment Hanfstaengl. So Dulles added:

- I think the same ... Mussolini, by the way, also falls under such a description, as far as I can judge from my contact with him.

"Well, that was a long time ago, Allen," said Dulles Sr. "Yes, in November 1932, but the characters of dictators change little... Except perhaps for the worse..." "Perhaps, yes," the elder brother agreed and turned back to Hanfstaengl: "Which of the two very opposite sides of Hitler's nature are you, dear Ernst Do you recommend playing? "I think we should use both of them..." Donovan gave Hanfstaengl a searching look, and then drawled: "That's probably smart... If I understand you correctly, you recommend

resorting to such strategic disinformation that will objectively push Hitler to a decision as much as possible put an end to Russia as soon as possible, and at the same time inflame his bile with a series of provocations, say, in Moscow? "General, I am delighted with the accuracy and brevity with which you set out my thought that has not yet been fully expressed! I'll just add - not only in Moscow ...

The Dulles brothers looked at each other and both nodded to each other. heads. The idea really deserved attention and approval.

"However," Hanfstaengl admitted, "this is a general idea, and its success or, on the contrary, failure will depend on specific conditions and details. "Oh, Ernst, you don't

have to worry about that," boomed the of his chair, John Foster Dulles. "We'll take care of that.

Now Donovan and Allen have exchanged glances... The former has already received an order from Wall Street (formally, from Roosevelt, of course) to form a new, dynamic intelligence service focused on the needs of an expanding world war. Was

the name had already been chosen - the Office of Strategic Services, personnel were being selected ... And Allen Dulles was preparing to become either the right hand of "Wild Bill" or the "gray eminence" of the Golden Elite in it.

SO, Donovan was looking at Dulles Jr., and he - already something, it seems, thinking concretely - was looking at Donovan ... Then Allen got up from his chair, lit an extinct pipe, took a couple of puffs and said:

- Well, gentlemen, let's try to summarize ... If Hitler does not go against the Russians, then he can finally come to an agreement with them and break England before we enter the game ...

Silence was his answer - everyone agreed with such a statement. And Dulles

continued: "Then, having gained a foothold in Europe politically and around the world—economically, Hitler can go with Japan to America...

"Do not forget about the possibility of connecting the Russians to this," Dulles Sr. voiced. - You just got

ahead of me ... I just wanted to say this. Of course, you're right... If Hitler doesn't start a war with him, in a couple of years Stalin will get stronger so that he will also get into a fight... He loves us no more than we love him... Allen puffed on his pipe and

summed up: - as our friends from the German Resistance call it - from England and orient it towards the Soviets ...

No one objected, and soon after that the guests began to say goodbye and dispersed. However, the next day, Donovan and Allen Dulles met again - already at John Foster Dulles. Hanfstaengl was not invited this time - he was superfluous, because it was not about the Fuhrer and not about his entourage, but about those specific reconnaissance actions that, according to the just statement of Putzi, should have determined the success of the whole plan.

However, at first Donovan informed the brothers:
"As our friends from Germany inform us via London, in Oberkommando der Heer, Halder is already developing the Barbarossa plan to invade Russia ... Allen Dulles nodded approvingly, but immediately doubted: seriously? After Brest? - So far nothing definite can be said ... - And the "Sea Lion"? Allen didn't hesitate. "It hasn't been archived yet either," Donovan sighed. - It turns out that the Fuhrer hesitates? Dulles Jr. asked again. - Alas, yes ... Here John Foster entered the conversation and declared discontentedly: is still strong, and the Soviets are still weak. "Of course," Donovan replied immediately. What will be our plan of action? asked two members of the nascent Office of Strategic Services, the chairman of the Rockefeller Foundation's Board of Trustees. "It will depend, perhaps, on who will implement this plan on the spot," Donovan answered. - In Berlin? - And in Berlin - too ... But specific geography will also be

depend on the choice of individuals.

"Oh," Donovan sighed, "it's a pity that we don't have a good "mole" for Stalin in Moscow now ... All three

looked at each other knowingly ... "Wild Bill" was right ... All three knew that in 1918 the captain turned around in Soviet Russia quite well George Hill (operational pseudonym - IK8) from the British military intelligence MI-6, also known as the Secret Intelligence Service, CIC ... With his baggy appearance, he absolutely did not look like a "spy", he successfully portrayed himself as a simpleton, a merry fellow, a reveler and a lover of delicious food. In fact, he was an experienced, cold and prudent intelligence officer, who was appreciated in the British secret service and who

he was also respected by the US secret service ... Hill performed special assignments for MI6, was an assistant to intelligence officer Sydney Reilly in the conspiracy of Ambassador Lockhart, after a failure, he escaped in time and was appointed a communications officer at the headquarters of General Denikin. The famous intelligence diplomat Robert Bruce Lockhart spoke of him in enthusiastic tones: "He was as brave and unstoppable as Reilly."

Hill faded over the years, loosened his tongue in 1932, and in his book *Go Spy* blabbed a lot about MI6's connection to Yankee Army Intelligence. However, at one time it was he who managed to get so close to the Chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council and People's Commissar of the Navy, Lev Trotsky, that the latter took George to his aviation adviser (Hill was trained in the Royal Air

Corps). Yes, it was all "moles" "mole"! It's a pity - not for long ... But Hill managed a lot, and then Trotsky did a good job for the Anglo-Saxons ... His position at the negotiations in Brest in 1918 with the Germans thwarted the possibility of a decent peace for Russia. The Russian front quickly fell apart. If the terms of peace had been accepted by the Soviets earlier, it is possible that the Germans would not have succumbed to the temptation to get involved in intervention against Soviet Russia, would have been satisfied with a separate peace with her and would have attacked the West. After all, their spring offensive in 1918 almost brought Kaiser Wilhelm II to that Paris, where Kaiser Wilhelm I had once already come with Bismarck. Then

the situation - albeit not immediately - was corrected by Lenin with his Treaty of Brest-Litovsk with Germany. But thanks to Trotsky's provocation, the Germans nevertheless got involved in the continuation of the war in the East. And this led them to defeat in the West - what the Yankees needed

Now the plans of the Golden International were thwarted by Stalin with his Brest meeting with the Fuhrer. And it was necessary to urgently do something: to misinform the Fuhrer, to provoke the Fuhrer ... And neither Donovan nor the Dulles had disagreements regarding the candidacy of the organizer of the campaign of strategic disinformation of Hitler.

It was clear that the head of the Abwehr, Rear Admiral Canaris, should do this.

Chapter 3. Memorandum of Canaris

At the beginning of 1941, Friedrich Wilhelm Canaris turned fifty-eight years old. He was born in the family of the director of a large metallurgical plant in Duisburg, and from the cradle he absorbed the elitist psychology of the master of life. In the years of his childhood, there were no Mercedes in Germany yet, and the family carriage delivered young Willy to and from school. With the coachman and with the horses, the young Canaris established the kindest relations, and this approach to small sims - whether about two, about four legs - remained with him for the rest of his life. He was *kind* to them - but in his own special way: while

"Cattle" knew its place.

Willy, who came from an industrialist background, had an understandable disgust for Marxism, but all his life he had a love of adventurism - carefully, however, hidden. Secrecy was generally his dominant feature - he

liked to be told *different things about him*, and in the minds of some he was a silent man, in the minds of others, on the contrary, he was almost a talker ... Someone claimed that he, who had been wearing a military uniform from the age of 18, could not stand military uniforms. And he loved the uniform - but also covertly, secretly, not for show. The calm career of his father did not attract the secretly ebullient nature of Canaris Jr.,

and he went to the Navy, and served with brilliance, famously! After all, he had the talent of an adventurer - even though he also hid it with talent, as befits the future chief of a serious secret service. And if the father, who died early, could observe the stormy biography of his son, he would be utterly amazed! Fenrich on the cruiser "Bremen" Willy participated in the blockade of Venezuela in 1907, was the chief of the watch on a torpedo boat (the lumps did not take root there), cruised on the small cruiser "Dresden" in the South Atlantic in World War I, was interned in Chile, fled through the Cordillera to Argentina, reached the Reich, received a reconnaissance mission in Spain (he would later be firmly connected with this country) ...

From November 1917, he was transferred to the submarine fleet - at first, the commander of the UC-27 transport submarine, which ensured the actions of its strike "colleagues" on the high seas, and in January 1918, Canaris was appointed commander of U-34 and later - U-128. The commander of a submarine in any fleet is the highest officer class, and Lieutenant Commander Canaris confirmed it by sending three transports to the bottom and earning the Iron Crosses 1st and 2nd classes.

The Reich of Wilhelm II collapsed. The structure of life native to Wilhelm Canaris could also collapse. And Canaris assumes responsibility for liaison between the naval formations of the "black" Volunteer Corps - the counter-revolutionary Freikorps - and the Minister of War, the Social Democrat Gustav Noske. The former combat officer helps put down a rebellion in Kiel, and soon becomes Noske's adjutant. Before that, not interested in politics, he plunges into it headlong and adjoins the only political direction acceptable to him - the extreme right. But even here the secrecy of Canaris affected - he preferred roles, although significant, but - secret, shadowy. And apparently, all the later "Weimar" years of Germany, he was just a naval officer. Canaris did not take part in the Nazi movement, but he immediately accepted the Fuhrer as Reich Chancellor, because Hitler gained power with the help of the "kings" of heavy industry, and one could hope that the new Reich Chancellor would act in line with the political "godfather" Canaris Noske, whom the workers nicknamed the "blood dog". Noske, by the way, did not deny such a nickname and always considered himself as a servant of Capital, and if "democracy", then exclusively bourgeois. In 1935, Captain zur see (captain 1st rank) Canaris accepted the offer of the then head of military intelligence of the Reich, captain zur see Konrad Patzig, to replace him in this post. Patzig did not get along with Himmler and

Heydrich, who was rapidly gaining strength, went into an "honorable retirement" in the fleet, but wanted to have a person he liked as his successor. With the assistance of Admiral Raeder, the new appointment of Canaris took place.

Arriving at the Abwehr, Canaris immediately declared the need for close ties with the NSDAP and with the party's security service - the SD. He willingly participated in the party congresses in Nuremberg, flaunting the admiral's

shape and imposing gray hair, and no less willingly helped Hitler to strengthen himself. After all, the Fuhrer in the eyes of Canaris was at that time a man of the Golden International - like Canaris himself.

However, the Fuhrer, without evolving towards Marxism, nevertheless began to raise the prestige and role of Labor in the Reich. The next step could be rapprochement - scary to say! — with the Russians! In August 1939, such a rapprochement became a fact. And this was already unacceptable for the admiral.

CANARIS - due to connections with the elite - has never been distinguished by special patriotism. His military successes were the result not so much of a conscious service to the Fatherland, but rather the result of the implementation of Willy's filibuster inclinations, which he did not need to hide due to the war, his youth and the insignificance of his status. When maturity came, she brought one firm conviction, which once

guided the aristocrat Charles Maurice Talleyrand. The Frenchman-defiant believed that there are only two categories of people in the world: those who cut their hair and those who are cut, and one must always be on the side of the former against the latter. So did Canaris. And for this reason alone, Wilhelm Canaris was inclined towards such a line of German foreign policy that would not conflict with the leading force, "shearing this world," with the Anglo-Saxons. Neither with the British, nor with the Yankees. The admiral traveled a lot abroad, traveled a lot, and his meetings with politicians and businessmen were by no means

idly cognitive. Like Donovan, he probed the general world situation for the benefit of his class, the propertied class, in anticipation of mighty world upheavals. The Fuhrer, on the other hand, increasingly attracted the poor, previously "shorn", with his social policy. And the Reich was gradually turning towards something like state capitalism. And it was already something like rudimentary socialism.

The chief of the Abwehr could not allow this, and in the second half of the 1930s he established contact with American intelligence. The admiral already had good relations with the British, since his affairs closely intersected with them during the Spanish Civil War. Although long before her, back in World War I, Canaris made his first acquaintances with His Majesty's secret agents in the Iberian Peninsula.

In Spain, the positions of British capital, and of US capital, were strong, and the rebellion of the generals Sanjurjo and Franco was not least undertaken in **their** defense. And one of the active supporters of Franco's support was precisely the chief of the Abwehr, Canaris, who also drew his Italian colleague Mario Roatta into this matter ... This was done, apparently, in the interests of the Reich, but in fact - in the name of preserving the influence of the Anglo-Saxons in Spain. So since then,

the admiral has increasingly begun to coordinate his plans and aspirations with them. And as ideas in the Reich grew stronger, bringing the working "cattle" into people, Canaris became more and more in hidden opposition to the Führer, more and more becoming not a German, "a citizen of the world."

But, in his carefully concealed secrecy, he skillfully concealed this too. Although the four-story headquarters of the Abwehr on Tirpitzufer 74/76 was nicknamed the "fox hole", and its owner was called the "cunning **fox** of German intelligence", Canaris managed to **double** the trail like a hardened **hare**.

And double this

way ... The flattering nickname implied that the "fox", since he is the "fox of **German** intelligence", always acts in the interests of **Germany** (which was Nazi at that time). And such confidence did not allow a different interpretation of the nickname, where only the first two words corresponded to the truth: "cunning fox." In fact, the "cunning fox" became a "fox" - a cosmopolitan, an agent of influence in the Reich of the supranational Golden Elite. And more and more often "foxes" carried out her orders.

In 1937, the most dangerous line for the West was outlined in the military leadership of Germany - the commander of the ground forces, General Fritsch, convinced the Fuhrer that Germany was now not in danger from the USSR ... Pro-Soviet sentiments grew in the army, and even Goering was inclined to side with Fritsch. For the West, there was an urgent need to neutralize Fritsch. Task

this was facilitated, however, by the fact that the Fuhrer did not like Fritsch's activity, and the SS and SD were unenthusiastic about the general - as well as he to them.

Canaris took advantage of this, although he acted through "contractors", including Heydrich ... Fritsch was accused of homosexuality and replaced by von Brauchitsch. Then Canaris, through the same

Heydrich, planted half genuine, half false compromising evidence on Marshal Tukhachevsky to Stalin. The marshal had serious intentions to eliminate Stalin, but focused more on Trotsky than on Hitler, and even more on himself and his subordinates. However, the exposure before Stalin of the "German trace" in the Tukhachevsky conspiracy objectively quarreled between Stalin and the Reich, undermining the possibility of blocking them. When the Fuhrer, after the Anschluss of Austria, in the spring of 1938 outlined a program for a new

Middle Europe under the leadership of Germany, Canaris embarked on the path of direct betrayal and began to prepare a "palace" coup with the participation of skeptic generals like Beck, Witzleben, Halder and civilian oppositionists like Goerdeler or Ulrich von Hassel ... And now the admiral directly coordinated all his actions with London and Washington. And the British and Yankees were

increasingly worried about contacts between Russians and Germans. These contacts, which began in 1939, had already led in May 1939 to the disastrous resignation of the Moscow supporter of an alliance with the West, the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR, the Jew Litvinov-Wallah, and to his replacement by Molotov. And the planned Russian-German dialogue could lead the devil knows what else ...

Canaris understood this no worse than his overseas colleagues, who were concerned about the future of the Golden International. And understanding meant action for him - he was a man of action, albeit a hidden one. He acted. In Moscow

in the summer of

1939, Soviet-English-French military negotiations were going on, doomed to failure even before they began ... In Moscow and Berlin, Stalin and Molotov, Hitler and Ribbentrop discussed the articles of the pact, which on August 23, 1939 would be signed in Moscow by the Soviet people's commissar and the imperial minister ... And the head of the General

The headquarters of the ground forces, Franz Halder, on August 21, noted in his official diary:

“Canaris reports: a). First of all, the conclusion of a guarantee pact does not correspond to the intentions of the Russians ... ”

The very next few days proved the opposite - the Russians not only intended to conclude a non-aggression pact with the Germans, but also concluded it in record time, contrary to the provocative "forecast" of the head of the Military Intelligence and Counterintelligence Department. But the admiral put the first stick in the "wheel" of a possible Russian-German common "cart". So he

said his first "a" in fulfillment of the plans of his new - Anglo-Saxon - political bosses ... That is, plans to prevent peace between Russians and Germans. But then, in August of the 39th, it was only "a" ...

Ahead were the years of the fortieth, and then - the forty-first. Fortieth passed - marked by the victories of the Reich. Forty-one has just begun.

For some time now, one of the tables in a small Berlin cafe not far from the American embassy has been chosen by the US military attache in Berlin, Thurman-Smith. He periodically appeared there and behaved in such a way that it could be assumed that he was trying to contact some of his agents or someone of that kind. And, although nothing suspicious was ever noticed behind him, the Yankees did not appear in the cafe by chance - his visit to the cafe was a signal for trusted agents of Canaris that trusted agents of Smith himself would get in touch in the same cafe in ... Well, then, after how many days after Smith's appearance

at the cafe, a meeting is scheduled, determined by the number of cups of coffee drunk by Colonel Smith.

The hour of the meeting was scheduled two hours after the time Smith left the cafe, and special passwords were not required - trusted persons in such

there is never too much business, and Canaris and Smith's agents knew each other by sight, even though Thurman-Smith and Canaris themselves did not know each other personally and had never met in person.

However, this did not prevent the Yankees from receiving always fresh and important information from the Abwehr chief about the plans of the Fuhrer regarding Poland, Belgium, France ... A week before the outbreak of hostilities on September 1, 1939 in Poland, Wilson, transmitted by Canaris through a secret channel, lay on the table at the US Ambassador in Berlin a copy of the transcript of Hitler's speech at a meeting of the top generals. There was also information through the Vice-Consul of the Reich in Zurich, the young Hans Berndt Gisevius, who had been associated with the Gestapo and the Abwehr since 1933 - when a member of the Steel Helmet Gisevius came to serve in Gestapo.

Gisevius enjoyed the confidence of the prominent Nazis Daluge and Frick, but he was also highly valued by the Anglo-Saxons, on whose instructions he began his career as a "Nazi functionary" ... Then the conspirators in the Ausamt - the German Foreign Ministry - brought Gisevius to Zurich, and a communication channel was created. Approximately once a week an Ausamt official officially crossed the Swiss border and officially saw Gisevius, who passed on the Fuhrer's secrets - naturally, unofficially - to the agents of "Wild Bill" Donovan. However, Gisevius himself often went to Berlin to meet with Canaris

and the Abwehr General Oster ... Usually, during such trips, they were given especially confidential information and instructions from across the ocean.

Communication with London was easier to establish - there were no serious problems and obstacles. Back in mid-August 1938, on behalf of the then Chief of the General Staff of the Ground Forces, Colonel General Ludwig Beck, his emissary Ewald von Kleist-Schmenzig traveled to London to meet with Lord Llod and Sir Robert Vansittart, the de facto head of the Foreign Office. The purpose of the trip was to convince the British of the need for a firm line in relation to Hitler's demands. Things then went to the Munich Agreement, that is, to the peaceful reunification of the Sudeten Germans with the Germans in the Reich, and the oppositionists did not want to strengthen Hitler, even if it led to the strengthening of Germany. Beck's messenger met

and with Sir Winston Churchill in his country residence and brought from him a personal message to Canaris.

Since then, the contacts of Admiral Canaris and General Oster with the "neighbors" from the "Island" have only strengthened.

HANS Oster, like the admiral himself, was not only an extraordinary personality, but also a vague, even mysterious one. He fought in the First World War, then served in the "Weimar" Reichswehr in the intelligence department of the War Ministry - the predecessor of the Abwehr Canaris.

Canaris made Oster head of the Central Department of the Abwehr. Moreover, the Abwehr is new, reorganized and unusually reinforced with personnel and means.

And then...

Here it is difficult to say exactly who involved whom in the anti-Hitler conspiracy of the "top opposition" - Canaris Oster or Oster - Canaris ... There was such a close coincidence of the course of thoughts and actions that any of them could dispute the priority in the idea of a conspiracy. Canaris selected the personnel with the same care and accuracy with which he acted always and in everything. However, his right hand, Oster, had a reputation for being almost frivolous. He could easily bring to Frankfurt am Main, to the headquarters of Army Group C, commanded by Colonel General Ritter von Leeb, a conspirator, a draft appeal of the conspirators to the people and the Wehrmacht in his uniform pocket. The head of the operations department of von Leeb's headquarters, Colonel Vinzenz Müller, opened his mouth in surprise at this and immediately burned a sheet of tissue paper in

ashtray.

And Oster reassured him: -

I keep these papers in a safe safe ... Müller just

shrugged his shoulders and sighed: - You're an old

intelligence officer! And you still don't know that the only relative, - here

Müller emphasized the last word, - a reliable safe is ...

And the colonel touched his temple.

Auster, however, immediately agreed with him.

However, Oster, like his boss, also knew how to present himself not as he was. And psychological mimicry became almost an instinct for him. Well, could, say, the Gestapo take Auster's "conspiracies" seriously if they knew anything about them? "Ah, is that the absent-minded talker from the land admiral's office? - then some SD standarten or brigadeführer would say. "Well, let him, let him have fun." But a simple-minded scout with great experience is actually from the same "opera" as a good-natured crocodile.

* * *

OSTER was the admiral's confidant not only in his line of duty, but also because of the similarity of his views on the future of Germany. **Their** Germany was to continue to be the Germany of the haves and for the haves. The difference was, perhaps, only in the fact that Oster would have preferred a return to a hereditary monarchy, and Canaris would have been quite satisfied with the "monarchy", where His Majesty Capital would firmly sit on the throne ... But - no doubt - their Germany should not have fallen out of **the** general anti-Soviet system of the Golden Elite of the World. And this was possible only if Germany remained in the orbit of the ever-increasing Anglo-Saxon world influence and did not oppose it. Accordingly, neither one nor the other believed in Greater Germany. Both believed that the dependence of the Reich on many types of raw materials (primarily on oil) did

not allow for a long and victorious war with the Anglo-Saxon West. Both were well aware, including as scouts, that a war with England is a war with the States, because the English Isle in the Old World is increasingly becoming only the foremost fort of the New World in Europe. So with the West

can't fight...

It turns out that it is necessary to fight against Russia. But even here Germany, they believed, could succeed only in a bloc with the Anglo-Saxons, because if she was hostile to them, the Anglo-Saxons would deal with a dangerous rival at the hands of the Russians.

The third option - a war with the West in an alliance with Russia or in the conditions of a firmly secured peace with Russia - was absolutely unacceptable to either Auster or Canaris. And it was not only their cool attitude towards Russia as such. An alliance with Soviet Russia was unacceptable, where only varieties of agricultural crops were elite, as well as boars-producers and cows-record holders ... Once Napoleon, after Waterloo, on the

eve of his final abdication and exile in 1815, was asked the question: why not he will not appeal to the energy of the French masses, who furiously chanted under the windows of the imperial palace: "Long live the emperor! Long live France! No need for renunciation!"? And the former revolutionary hero of Toulon, the former hero of the Arcole Bridge, grunted in response: "I don't want to be king of the Jacquerie..." life without a yoke, without deceit, to a life **of justice**, without masters and

"cattle" ... And Napoleon, even at the cost of losing power, did not want to go to such a France in which the working people, and not the dukes and princes restored by him, would have rights. Oster and Canaris were here similar to the emperor of the French - they would rather agree to the collapse of the Reich, which proclaimed May 1 Labor Day, than to its

stable prospects in alliance with the Russian state of workers.

And the Fuhrer objectively needed such an alliance if he did not want the collapse of the Reich. But Hitler wavered between inexhaustible anti-communism and an understanding of the need for a loyal line towards the Soviets. The latter was a crime in the eyes of the Canaries, Osters, Churchills, Dulles, Roosevelts, Rockefellers, Donovans and others.

A crime in their eyes was the desire of the Fuhrer to politically and economically oppose the Anglo-Saxons, uniting against them all the freedom-loving peoples of the planet. It was not for nothing that Hitler in November 1940 told Molotov in Berlin that the question of curbing the global appetites of the United States was not a question of the 45th, but of the 70th, 80th and even 2000 ...

Therefore, after the defeat of France in the summer of 1940, when preparations for the invasion of England began, Oster started a frank conversation with Canaris,

asking: - Will you stay,

boss? Oster meant the possible resignation of Canaris, and he

replied: - I think

so ... - But if we remain in the most important secret structure of the regime, then we will increasingly share responsibility for all his actions ...

put the last dot over the "i":

— Including — and for criminal.

"So what do you want,

Hans?" "I would like to know what you want,

Excellence. - You, Hans, are a scout - so get information about my desires, using professional skills," Canaris quipped. Oster did not

accept the joke and looked seriously, attentively. "All right,

all right, Hans," Canaris relented. "I understand everything you mean, but I see no other way to interfere with the corporal's plans than by remaining at your post.

So, now the admiral has dotted the "i". And Canaris, as well as Auster, remained. And having remained, the admiral began to repeat about the inevitability of war with the Russians and already in the summer of 1940 he assured everyone who was possible, that is, the top of the General Staff and generals, that the Fuhrer would definitely go to the East. In the summer of 1940, this was a provocative lie, but this lie, in the mouth of such a figure as Canaris, looked like a reliable, hidden truth ... And this, of course, corroded the potential of the Soviet-German peace and military

partnership. The Fuhrer, after the defeat of France, solemnly offered peace in July 1940 to Britain. However, did not Europe need peace, but US agents of influence in Europe? A quick and just peace in the Old World did not give the States a chance for world domination. It became real for the United States only when Europe was exhausted and indebted to the Yankees in all respects, when Russia and Germany were exhausted in the struggle against each other.

Therefore, the cosmopolitan Churchill arrogantly refused peace, promising his people only sweat, blood and tears at a time when not a single bomb had fallen on England yet. But pressure on England is

not only pressure on England ... Let's say the Fuhrer was interested in connecting Spain to the anti-English coalition. Without Spain, it was impossible, in particular, Operation Felix - the capture of Gibraltar. And Hitler persistently persuaded Franco to agree to the deployment of German troops in Spain. Caudillo refused over and over again. Hitler saw the hand of London here, but the Fuhrer spoiled the game here not so much by London as

by Canaris, although at the direction of London and, of course, Washington.

In Spain, the admiral had wide connections from the First World War and had them in the widest circles of society - from the royal court to the Catholic padres. He spoke good English, could conduct complex negotiations in French and Italian, but was only fluent in Spanish ... Spain was both his youth, and love, and a convenient channel of communication. It was not for nothing that a huge portrait of a caudillo hung in his office ... And just Canaris did his best to set Franco against an open political and military alliance with Germany. Although Gibraltar, controlled by the Reich, would immediately change the whole picture in the Mediterranean and African theaters of war. In addition, the traditional English fiefdom of Portugal, if German garrisons were in Spain, would have behaved differently.

Yes, the "cunning fox" from Tirpitzufer, 74/76 became an important factor in the negative influence on the Fuhrer and an increasingly valuable agent of influence of the world "behind the scenes".

The BREST meeting between Hitler and Stalin discouraged the admiral. The Führer, who had already veered to the left, towards the Russians, could finally shift the helm to a course towards peace with Russia. And the fact that even after Brest, he not only did not curtail the Barbarossa events, but paid more and more attention to them, nothing

proved. In fact, the scales fluctuated, and even a small "weight" thrown on one or another bowl could give the necessary preponderance in one direction or another.

From a young age, the admiral was a fighter, a combat submarine commander. And he, as an experienced submariner, temporarily "lay low" just to look for an opportunity to torpedo the peace plans of Hitler and Stalin. Knowing how to pose as an executive servant if necessary, he, with all possible zeal, began to intensify intelligence work against the USSR, and in such a way as to spur the Fuhrer on this, and throw information to Stalin for suspicion. In the Reich, many departments were engaged in

the collection of intelligence information. For example, to coordinate all types of economic intelligence in Germany, a special-purpose headquarters "Russia" was created, and all the data received by it was transferred to the Munich Institute of Geopolitics, where a thousand historians, economists, and statisticians worked. The leading geopolitician of Germany was General Karl Haushofer, and he was a staunch supporter of the continental bloc along the Berlin-Moscow-Tokyo axis ... So nothing really threatened us from this side - geopoliticians and economists believed that it was better for the Reich to be friends with the Russians than to fight with them .

There was the Koenigsberg Institute for the Economics of Eastern Europe, where Theodor Oberländer was director for many years. There was the Wannsee Institute of Konstantin Michael Akhmeteli, who studied the Soviet economy very carefully.

Hermann Goering founded the Hermann Goering Research Institute in 1933 to control telephone and radio communication in Germany and beyond. But the collection of

information of a military nature was the prerogative of the Abwehr. That is, Canaris. However, even here there was inconsistency ... For example, the SD, the security service, and specifically, the VI Directorate of SS Brigadeführer Walter Schellenberg, was engaged in intelligence. But in addition to the Abwehr, military intelligence was also in charge of the Foreign Armies of the East department - the 12th Directorate of the General Staff of the German Armed Forces (OKB). This department was engaged in radio intercepts, deciphering, aerial reconnaissance ... It also had agents.

The Abwehr was nevertheless the most powerful and extensive intelligence organization of the Reich, although this was not always the case. Actually, "Abwehr" means "Defense, rebuff", and the verb "Abwehren" means "to prevent, repel an attack" ... And the Abwehr was modest by the counterintelligence department of the "Weimar" Ministry of Defense with a staff of three officers, seven retired officers and several clerks. Before the defeat in the First World War, the Germans had a powerful intelligence

service headed by the famous Colonel Walter Nicolai, but after the defeat, the Allies demanded that the Germans confine themselves to counter-espionage, which was reflected in the name "Abwehr". Under Konrad Patzig, the Abwehr expanded, but Canaris brought a genuine revival in the spirit of the era of Nicolai. In 1938, Hitler

liquidated the War Ministry, replacing it with the OKB - Oberkommando der Wehrmacht (High Command of the Armed Forces). The Abwehr came under the control of the Design Bureau, but as an almost independent structure - in contrast to the 12th Directorate "Foreign Armies of the East". The special role and special position of the Abwehr was also expressed in the fact that his boss was the only one of the intelligence officers of the Reich who had direct access to the Fuhrer. That is, there was a lot of information on the USSR in Germany, because many were engaged in collecting and obtaining it through agents, but only the information that corresponded to the

intentions and plans of Canaris reached the Fuhrer. Neither Canaris nor his Anglo-Saxon patrons could wish for anything better. The chief of the Abwehr had every opportunity to effectively provoke Hitler against Russia and Stalin.

EXAGGERING the strength of Britain and its ability to resist the admiral was not so difficult - in this matter he had enough assistants, starting with a colleague in the conspiracy, the head

General Staff of the Wehrmacht Halder and ending with fellow conspirators from the Foreign Ministry.

Naturally, he also had assistants in the Abwehr itself. Ever since Canaris' service under Noske, he had been close to Corvette Captain Lydig. Franz Lidig had a negative attitude towards the Nazis, and therefore the admiral took him to his Abwehr and sent him as a representative from intelligence to the headquarters for the preparation of the landing in Norway in April 40. Operation

"Weserübung" - as it was called in the Wehrmacht - was programmed by the policy of the British themselves. They began to mine Norwegian territorial waters, depriving the Germans of the possibility of reliably transporting Swedish iron ore along the Norwegian coast. The British were also preparing their landing in Norway - the Fuhrer preempted them by a few days, starting the operation on April 9, 1940. The German high command was

negative about Hitler's plan - the generals were weak in the economy of the war. And Canaris and Oster strengthened them in this position through their own channels. At the same time they informed London.

On the eve of the start of the Weserübung, Canaris held a meeting where Lydig reported on the situation. After listening to him, Admiral said:

Let's hope that the British military leadership knows his job and will do what is expected of him. - Namely?

Lydig asked. - We need such blows from the English fleet that would show Hitler, how weak his naval forces are... But will it

be so? Auster snapped. Canaris looked at him carefully and said clearly: "I would like to think that the British would do something similar."

with all the seriousness possible. Oster nodded

understandingly, really understanding that the admiral entrusted him with the orientation of the British in the right direction. And Canaris, having said what he said, was already

explaining: "However, everything is possible ... And we, intelligence, must also do everything possible to strengthen Hitler's impression of

display of British power. We must present as many alarming reports as possible of counterattacks by British forces...

These speeches were treacherous in relation to Hitler, but after all, traitors, conspirators gathered in the office of Canaris! Hitler this time did not let the Abwehr deceive himself, and the German soldiers began to land in the Oslo fjord. Subsequent attempts by the Britons to throw the Germans into the sea ended in nothing, especially since the Norwegians (unlike their Dane king) did not like the British more than the Germans. Nevertheless, the information of Canaris helped the British to hit the Reich fleet very sensitively - the losses of warships turned out to be unexpectedly serious. And Canaris already had another problem - to complicate the life of the Fuhrer and make it easier for the Anglo-French in the upcoming summer campaign of the 40th

of the year.

No one doubted that Germany would strike at France bypassing the Maginot Line through Belgium and Holland - the Allies had previously developed a plan "D" for their own invasion of "neutral" Belgium. But when will Germany strike? The Dutch, unlike

the Norwegians, traditionally liked the British, and the "neutral" Holland directly coordinated its plans with London and Paris. On its territory in November 1939, the famous "Venlo Incident" took place, when Walter Schellenberg, who, at the direction of Himmler, played the role of a conspirator - a "fighter of the German Resistance", brought the English agent Best and his employees, including the Dutch officer Klop, to the territory of the Reich. So Holland was preparing to resist the Germans - not in the name of its by that time ephemeral "independence", but in the name of the future of Amsterdam and other international bankers.

The blow of the Reich was inevitable. The question

remains - when? The answer was given by Oster, having contacted his friend, the Dutch military attache in Berlin Zas, on May 9, 1940 - on the eve of the beginning of the May offensive of the Wehrmacht on the morning of May 10. But even here Canaris was disappointed. The "mighty" British lion turned out to be a "paper tiger" in fact, and France collapsed. What,

in fact, it fully corresponded to the plan of the Golden International to conduct a long, exhausting war in Europe.

The British Expeditionary Force through Dunkirk barely managed to carry their feet back to Britain. The Führer was preparing Operation Sea Lion... Now Canaris was about to attempt to thwart this most important operation for the further development of events. After all, her success would mean the end of the war. And the admiral began to fabricate "alarming" reports about the great potential for British resistance. At the same time, even those in the Reich who saw, to put it mildly, the scale of "British power" inflated by the Abwehr, were not very inclined to clarify the truth, because few were sure of the success of the invasion, and the "disappointing" data of the Abwehr made it possible to delay "moment of truth" in the West for a longer period.

Man is weak - few wanted to tempt fate in the waters of the Pas de Calais and the English Channel. And even to the Fuhrer himself, Operation Sea Lion to invade the British Isle seemed less and less real.

CANARIS understood this and used it to the full extent as it was necessary for London and Washington. However, there was a nuance unpleasant for the admiral. It was not difficult for him to overestimate British power, deftly fabricating "alarming" intelligence reports. But the underestimated data on Russian power - if the fact of their underestimation by the Abwehr - were revealed, they would immediately find many critics in the Reich. And, in general, for the same reason - an excess of hunters to tempt fate on the plains of Russia in the Reich was also not observed.

Moreover, the opponents of the war with Russia would be more persistent in their criticism of the "Westerners" already by virtue of their devotion to Germany (among the "Westerners" prevailed not so much patriots as cosmopolitans). The same military attache of Germany in Moscow Kestring highly appreciated the strength of the Red Army, and Ambassador Schulenburg supported him in this. Canaris faced a difficult task - to refute competent opponents, because their opinion could also reach the Fuhrer, and sometimes it did!

In Brest, Stalin presented Hitler **with weighty** arguments in favor of peace - the KB heavy tank weighed about 50 tons. Yes, and the average T-34 "pulled" almost 30 tons. The number of tanks was also convincing ... Stalin's willingness to share old Russian tanks with Berlin's allies was also impressive. But the Fuhrer doubted whether the Russians were as strong as Stalin had presented him on the November Belorussian field of exercises last year, 1940.

Canaris needed to amplify Hitler's doubts and turn them into certainty. New Russian tanks? Yes! .. But - "raw", not brought to condition ... Do they withstand a direct hit? Yes!.. But neither the Fuhrer nor Guderian climbed inside the tanks... And how much armor was there in the towers - who knows these Russians? Maybe half a meter! And then this "tank" carried only armor - without ammunition, without a gun ... Maybe the Russians had one barrel out

brought out...

But the Abwehr has evidence that the Russians do not have the necessary capacities to create powerful armored formations. But - they are intensively creating such capacities and in a year or two they will really be able to show the subordinates of Guderian and Goth where crayfish winter in Russia ... So the "cunning fox" of the

cosmopolitans deftly pursued his cunning, "fox" line. And gradually, page after page, his memorandum about the military weakness of the Soviets was created ... And this memorandum was supposed to lead the Fuhrer to a simple thought: we must hit Russia immediately - **before it's too late!** Yes, the memorandum was supposed to solve a dual task - to finally discourage the

Fuhrer from wanting to invade the Island, but to encourage him in his intention to go to Russia. And on March 1, 1941, Admiral Friedrich Wilhelm Canaris put this memorandum on the table to Hitler.

The Fuhrer picked up a folder of thick leather, where the thickness of the contents was thinner than the cover, held it in his hands, opened it, flipped through a couple of pages, closed it, put it on the table and

said: "I will read this carefully, Canaris. But in a nutshell - your resume?"

The ADMIRAL proudly threw up his head, always held high, adorned with a noble, intellectual gray hair, and confidently, weightily said:

- My Fuehrer! Russia is a colossus with feet of clay!

Chapter 4

The Canaris memorandum did not reassure the Fuhrer... One way or another, he now had three priority problems, the solution of which could not be postponed: England, Russia, Africa.

England did not go to peace. And for England, Operation Seelevé - Sea Lion was being prepared.

With Russia, he was at peace, but was ready to declare war on her. Russia is the Barbarossa plan.

Africa was the means to defeat England without invading the Island. Napoleon already understood that this was possible, because already in his time Egypt was one of the keys to England. So,

three problems, three main headaches. And not even three, but four!

The fourth was oil. The source of oil for the Reich was primarily Romania. In 1941, Romanian oil production was to increase from one and a half to almost six million tons. The Fuhrer tried to secure the Ploiesti fields as much as possible, and they were now securely covered ... But - one successful raid, and ... Yes, the British threatened his Romanian

oil. And - perhaps the Russians ... As long as the British did not have

continental air bases in Europe, there was no immediate danger to Ploiesti. And if these bases appear there? Possible British footholds in the Balkans are

Yugoslavia and Greece. The Yugoslavs are still loyal to the Reich ... At the beginning of March, it was finally possible to invite Prince Regent Paul to Germany and agree with him on Yugoslavia joining the Pact of Three on the condition that the Axis renounce the requirements of military support by Yugoslavia for Germany and Italy and the right of transit of German troops through Yugoslav territory.

Greece ... The Duce recklessly poked his head into Greece and thereby stirred up the British, gave them a reason to increase their activity on

mediterranean sea. And now they clearly intend to occupy Greece themselves. However, the Fuehrer did not want and could not give Greece to the British. Therefore, on December 13, 1940, he approved Directive No. 20 on the occupation of Greece under the Marita plan.

But hands had not yet reached Greece ... But a lot of time was occupied by Russian plans and thoughts about the possibility and necessity of their implementation ... Hitler believed Canaris - as much as you can believe the intelligence chief. After all, any intelligence can mislead the leadership either due to a lack of information, or due to successful disinformation from a hostile camp.

Canaris gave the Fuehrer accurate data on France, and this really helped in last year's campaign. So it was worth thinking and thinking about the conclusions of the admiral regarding the power and intentions of the Russians.

And in MOSCOW, the English ambassador Stafford Cripps led his provocations ... Left Laborist Richard Stafford Cripps arrived as ambassador to Moscow in the stormy summer of 1940 and arrived with adventures - the French campaign of the Germans greatly complicated the ability of the British to move around Europe. However, Cripps appeared in the Russian capital not for the first time - in February 1940, he had already come to Moscow as a member of the House of Commons, met with Molotov. And Cripps had a strong, well-known reputation as a supporter of a "collective security system" with the participation of the USSR. This system was the brainchild of People's Commissar "Litvinov", and Russia was assigned the role of a boy in it to beat either the Germans, or **the Germans**. But this did not bother anyone in England, and the appointment of Cripps to Moscow looked like a clear provocation of the British in relation to the Reich. Moreover, Stalin had an unprecedentedly long, three-hour conversation with Cripps almost immediately after the latter presented his credentials. In Moscow, this living symbol of "Anglo-Soviet friendship" did what he was sent to do - a subtle breakdown of German-Soviet relations. And at one time the shares of the Ambassador of England were somehow quoted in

Moscow, but recently they have only fallen - the Englishman did not succeed in his main business.

And on March 6, 1941, Cripps, who had just returned from Turkey, called a press conference at his embassy. The Englishmen Chollerton, Lovell, Cassidy, the American Duranty and the Americans Shapiro and Magidov were invited.

- Gentlemen, my information is strictly confidential and cannot be used for printing ... - immediately

the ambassador said.

The newsmen looked at each other knowingly and—not particularly hiding themselves—smirked. Everyone understood perfectly well that statements “off the record” to representatives of the press are made for one purpose - to put into circulation what is colloquially referred to as “well-verified rumors”.

Cripps looked around once more with his simple Labor eyes and said in an almost casual tone:

- A Soviet-German war is inevitable. Shapiro and Magidov exchanged quick glances, while the expressive Duranty immediately jumped up:

"How do you know that, Mr. Cripps?" - From various sources, including from Berlin, and also - as a result of an analysis of the situation by the British Imperial General Staff. Its head, Sir John Dill, believes that the combat effectiveness of the Red Army is extremely low... - But it's not like that, -

again Duranty could not stand it. - I, gentlemen, think so myself and informed Eden and Dill about this ... The Russians are much stronger than they think, and every day they become stronger ...

“Perhaps so,” said Lovell thoughtfully, “but why would Hitler get another headache without solving his problems with us? “That's one of the

reasons,” said Cripps. - The war must begin precisely this year, because the Red Army is growing stronger all the time, and the power of the German army will weaken more and more if the war with England drags on. Therefore, it is more profitable for Hitler to try to break the Russian army before its reorganization is completed.



There was silence in the room ... The journalists considered what they had heard, and Cripps once again evaluated what he had said. Then he added: - The German

General Staff is convinced that Germany can capture the Ukraine and the Caucasus up to Baku in two or three weeks ... Sir John Dill also believes ...



On the same day, March 6, 1941, Cripps was at Vyshinsky's. It was not the first time Molotov's first deputy listened to an Englishman, and he politely responded to secular courtesies, and soon Cripps began a conversation on the merits, "confidentially" saying that the Turkish ambassador in Berlin had been informed by the German ausamt that if a war broke out between Turkey and Germany , then the Turks will have to deal with the Russian army in the Caucasus. "Of course, all this is nonsense," Cripps "reassured" Vyshinsky, "however,

in Turkey this is alarming for some, and it would be nice if the Soviet government expressed a sympathetic attitude towards Turkey ... After all, the Turks are convinced that the Germans will attack them soon...

For a cunning Brit, Cripps behaved awkwardly - provocation bulged here clearly. To express sympathy for the Turks against the background of their hostility to the Germans (which, however, existed more in Cripps' speeches than in reality) meant to worsen our relations with Berlin. But Cripps counted on it.

However, that was not all ... - There

are rumors, - the Englishman continued, - that all the actions of Germany in the Balkans at the present time are aimed only at protecting their Balkan flank in the upcoming attack on the USSR ... An attack on the USSR will give Germany the opportunity to make peace with England based on the rejection of Belgium, France and other things at the expense of the USSR. Vyshinsky listened, Cripps

provoked:

— What should be done by those who are against the expansion of the sphere of war? Obviously, to create strong resistance to

Germany ... Vyshinsky could have answered here: "What is needed? England must make peace with Germany, which Germany has offered her more than once. That's all ... "But Andrei Yanuarievich was a smart man and knew that in the house of a hanged man they don't talk about a rope. So he said nothing, and Cripps poured

like a nightingale: "Yugoslavia is being dragged into the Tripartite Alliance, waving the rag of the "red danger" ... I have been fighting hackneyed propaganda about this supposed danger in England for six years ...

Here Vyshinsky could not stand it and threw outwardly indifferent tone:

- And to no avail, it seems?

Cripps didn't notice the irony (or didn't want to notice it) and eagerly confirmed:

- Yes, alas, with results disproportionate to the invested energy ... But now we urgently need to improve the situation in the Balkans ... Unfortunately, the original plan to unite Turkey, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Greece is not being implemented ... And it would be good if the initiative to create such a union came from if only from you ... The British then were actively working

to secure their own Balkan flank by opening hostilities in the Balkans by the Balkan countries themselves against the Germans - then it would be easier for England to intervene in the situation. To involve the Russians in such activities would be a gift of fate for London, for which, in fact, Cripps had been procrastinating in Vyshinsky's office for the second hour already ... Cripps offered Russia to "support" Turkey and was ready to "communicate the opinion of

Mr. Vyshinsky to the Turks through the British ambassador in Ankara" . Surprised by the Briton's ability to learn someone else's opinion without his master, Vyshinsky diplomatically replied that in such matters personal opinion does not matter.

Cripps did not let up: - But

Mr. Stalin also told me about this last year, when I had the great honor of talking to him!

"Mr. Cripps," Vyshinsky could not restrain himself, "it should be clear to you that without the permission of Comrade Stalin, I

I can't answer.

==

Cripps left without a salty slurp, and the recording of Vyshinsky's conversation with him lay on the tables of Stalin, Molotov, Voroshilov, Kaganovich and Mikoyan. Soon, the People's Commissar for State Security of the USSR Vsevolod Merkulov received a message about Cripps' "press conference" at the embassy. A little later, Stalin and Molotov also had it. And also - from Hitler, since Canaris was carefully provided with information about the "revelations" of Cripps both through intelligence channels from Moscow and directly from London ...

STALIN now often discussed the situation with Molotov, but often spoke in private and with Zhdanov - Andrei Andreevich thought more broadly and more original. And the first secretary of the Leningrad regional committee and city committee now had to visit Moscow more often and more regularly. In one of these conversations,

Zhdanov heard: "We are successfully solving our political and historical tasks, and both coalitions, in fact, are looking for connections with us, they are even trying to speculate on the facts of maintaining relations with us against the other side, while at the same time not being able to interfere actively in our affairs, or interfere with us, and even more so - draw us into the war ...

Stalin was, as always, unhurried, and the inner tension of the last few months did not manifest itself outwardly in any way - except that he lit his pipe more carefully than usual, and it also went out more often than before. And he quietly - as if to himself -

reasoned: - Has the problem that could lead to war with us been removed now, in the midst of a world war? - And he himself answered: - No, not removed! Zhdanov perked up and said:

- It is characteristic that in one of the newspapers of England there is a "cry from the soul" - they say, we need to come to our senses, what are we doing! We are destroying each other while the USSR is getting stronger! In fact, enemy

number one is the USSR! - That's it, - supported Stalin, - they would very much like us to grapple. Have you read, Andrey Andreevich, what Cripps recently said at the embassy? - I read ... -

Well, what do you think? "I think that behind all this is the desire to resolve their contradictions at the expense of us and drag us into the war, so as not to leave us as an arbiter in a world conflict ...

Stalin instantly pointed his right index finger at Zhdanov and quickly said: "Here,

Andrey Andreevich, you said the main word - "arbiter" ... Everything seems to be right - if the war is imperialist, then why should we take the side of one of the parties in it . If there is a massacre and extermination of two hostile coalitions of imperialist powers, why should we interfere? And we set everyone up this way, and we set up ...

"But, Comrade Stalin," Zhdanov did not understand, "you yourself recently pointed out that we need to be in a state of mobilization readiness in the face of the danger of a military attack so that no tricks of our external enemies could take us by surprise ...

"He pointed it out," Stalin agreed with unconcealed irony, and then looked cheerfully at Zhdanov and already seriously asked: "But are we right in believing this?

Zhdanov recalled conversations with Stalin last year, when Iosif Vissarionovich weighed whether it was necessary to go for further rapprochement with the Germans? And now, remembering this, he asked:

"So you think we should directly take the side of Germany?" - So far, I'm just

thinking, Andrei Andreevich ... In Brest, Hitler impressed me as a sober politician. But he, just as a sober politician, should be very worried about Russia ... He is waging war, weakening, and we are getting stronger in peace. England already

Now America is helping... In a couple of years, America will definitely enter the war on the side of England... And at that time we will be behind the Germans, with the reorganized, rearmed Red Army... Here, Andrey Andreyevich, you will think... — So what to do, Comrade Stalin? War with

England? But this
or...

“No, Andrey Andreyevich,” Stalin grimaced, “it’s not about immediately fighting England. The point is that Germany does not gain the desire and reason to fight with us ...

A few days later, Stalin was already talking to Molotov: - Are we right in the line regarding Yugoslavia, Vyacheslav?

The British are doing everything to gain a foothold there, but we ...

Stalin's doubts were more than justified here. At one time, Moscow was thinking about a coup in Yugoslavia ... Through the department of Beria - the NKVD, then - the NKGB Merkulov, as well as through the channels of military intelligence, funds were transferred to Belgrade, suitable candidates were found among the officers ...

At first glance, one could firmly hope for success here - in Serbia they always looked towards Russia with hope. Alas, we have always lost sight of the fact that these hopes were always of a dependent character - Russians were loved not so much because their language is very similar to Serbian, but because the Russians were always ready to turn their sides for the interests of the Balkan Slavs.

But the Balkan masses did not want to look at the interests of the Slavic support - Russia, as their own. And in Yugoslavia, for example, white emigrants felt very at ease. For the Whites, Yugoslavia was the second convenient home after Bulgaria! In France, in Germany, they were only tolerated, but not really welcomed.

So, the mood of the Balkan masses was not such that the Yugoslav "tops" abandoned the anti-Soviet line in politics under pressure from the masses. Yugoslav anti-Sovietism was so strong that diplomatic relations between Belgrade and Moscow were established only on June 25, 1940!

But the Balkan "tops" had long been tied with ties with the Masonic West, and the very transformation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes into the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1929 took place under the tricolor banner of the Masonic model. Accordingly, in these "tops" there were many who leaned towards England and the United States.

Enough, however, and inclined to focus on Germany, which was economically logical for Yugoslavia. In 1932, the export of goods to Germany was 11.3 percent, in 1936 - 27.3 percent. By 1939 it had risen to almost 32 percent. A similar picture was with imports: in 1932, Yugoslavia

imported from Germany 17.7 percent of the goods she needed, four years later this figure increased to 26.7 percent, and in the 39th - up to 47.7 percent. Sitting on two chairs is not an easy task, and the beginning of the thirties turned out to be

an era of government crises for Yugoslavia. In 1929, the first "Yugoslavian" prime minister was General Zivkovic, the head of the "White Hand" - a secret Masonic officers' organization. However, already in 1932, national and social conflicts led to the replacement of Zhivkovic by Marinkovic, and then it went: prime ministers Srskich, Uzunovich, Eftich ... In October 1934, the Croatian Ustashe - separatists and supporters of an alliance with Germany and Italy - killed Yugoslav Tsar Alexander in Marseilles. At the same

time, French Foreign Minister Jean Louis Barthou, an aged but experienced and energetic servant of the Golden International, was also eliminated. The regency under the 11-year-old son of Alexander Peter II was accepted by Prince Paul.

Jeftich soon fell, and Stojadinovic, who had formed a cabinet in 1935, was smart enough to expand economic cooperation with the Reich. A gradual political rapprochement also began. But the activation of Croatian nationalists, openly oriented towards Germany, led to the resignation of Stojadinovic as well. The prime minister turned out to be a major Serbian owner, Cvetkovic. The post of foreign minister was taken by the former ambassador to Berlin, Tsintsar-Markovic, and the Croat Maczek became deputy prime minister.

On February 23, 1941, Reich Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop received the new Japanese ambassador, General Oshima. Five months ago Oshima's predecessor Kurusu, Ribbentrop and Ribbentrop's Italian colleague Count Ciano had signed the Pact of Three in Berlin, and now Oshima had to expand his empire's ties with the Reich. For a long time, Oshima was a military attaché in Berlin, and there was no need to bring him up to date on European affairs, so Ribbentrop simply clarified the current state of affairs for Oshima:

- Thanks to our influence, Bulgaria recently concluded an agreement with Turkey, and this means that Turkey is dissociating itself from the policy of possible military actions of England in the Balkans ... - And Yugoslavia? Oshima

asked. - Statesmen. ate from there were recently with us, so that testify your desire to live with us and Italy in peace...

- On what basis? "I think," replied the German, "sooner or later the Yugoslavs will either join the Pact of Three, or one way or another they will go over to our camp. Prince Pavel hesitates, but he will also be forced to submit to state necessity ...



The Balkans has always been for Russia a place where the Russians - if they tried to infiltrate there - acquired only superfluous problems, but never acquired anything lasting, positive and weighty. Trying to influence the situation in Yugoslavia under these conditions was, to put it mildly, unreasonable for the USSR. But such attempts began - Moscow still believed in the sincere loyalty of the Serbs to the Russians, not realizing that this loyalty has long been akin to the "friendliness" of a strange dog with an owner: you can give it a fried sausage - it wags its tail; you can't - she immediately runs to the owner, even if he gives her only

bone.

And yet, General Sudoplatov from the NKGB, among other troublesome cases, was obliged to deal with the "Yugoslav" ones ... In Moscow, they even managed to recruit the Yugoslav ambassador Gavrilovich, but he

I had contacts with Cripps for a week... After all, the British were also actively preparing to overthrow Cvetkovych and replace the regent Pavel with the young Anglicized Alexander. And it was a big question - who does Gavrilovich really work for? So Stalin was now pondering whether it makes sense to replace the Germanophile

Cvetkovich with some Anglophile. A true friend of the USSR at the head of Yugoslavia was ruled out, because Russia had no truly influential friends there. "Hitler is courting the Yugoslavs—this is understandable," Stalin said to Molotov. - But for what purpose? - It's clear with what - tired for him, they will cut their throats, and
he

becomes the master of Yugoslavia.

- He is already the owner there - economically. The capital of the Austrian Jews invested in Yugoslavia now came to him. And to lead the business towards political hegemony is to tease Italy and Mussolini ...

Stalin thought. "No, Vyacheslav," he shook his head negatively. - He would need Yugoslavia like a fifth wheel in a cart, if he was sure that the British would not enter it.

- How? Through Greece? Unbelievable... why? We want to help the Serbs overthrow Cvetkovic? "Well, we want to," agreed Molotov. - Let's assume that we succeed ... But will it not turn out that someone comes to power who proclaims neutrality in words, but in reality will focus on the British and invite them to protect themselves from the Germans? "Well, he'll invite ..." Molotov saw nothing wrong with that. However, Stalin explained: - To prevent this from happening, Hitler

will have to occupy Yugoslavia. He is very much afraid of Romanian oil... And the flanks must not be given to

England... - This must not be allowed! Molotov objected gloomily. - What? — German occupation... — How? Molotov was silent, and Stalin summed up:

- It is not profitable for us to tease the Germans ... And any of our interference in the Balkan affairs will be a red rag for Hitler ... And, perhaps, Vyacheslav, I must tell Merkulov to stop all work on Yugoslavia. Let it go as long as it goes, but without us.

And the SPRING of the 41st brought with it not only the rapid melting of heavy snows - which promised a good harvest, but also a no less stormy flood of political events.

On March 1, 1941, Bulgaria joined the Pact of Three, and a contingent of German troops arrived on its territory. On the same day, Turkey closed the Dardanelles to all ships except those carrying Turkish pilots. On March 5, England broke off relations with

Bulgaria. And on March 5, British workers were forbidden to leave their factories without permission from the organs of the Ministry of Labor. But it was believed that, unlike the "totalitarian" USSR, in England everything was done in the interests of "democracy" ... On March 8, the Luftwaffe, after a two-month break, conducted

a powerful air raid on London. At the beginning of January 1941, it was officially announced that during the December raids of 1940, civilian casualties amounted to 3,793 killed and 5,044 wounded. However, if we consider that the BBC only downplayed the losses of British fighters, but willingly inflated the numbers of "Nazi atrocities", then these "accurate" data could be easily reduced by a factor of three - especially since there was no "missing" column in the report, without which it could not do during the bombing of a large city. On March 11, 1941, the US Congress overwhelmingly passed the Lend-Lease Act. America was not then at war with Germany and was not in allied relations with England. However, the Lend-

Lease Act was adopted specifically for England, because without it, England could get out of the war. The pre-war British gold reserve of four and a half billion dollars melted into her

fire by the end of the 40th year. And on December 7, 1940, Churchill sent a letter to Roosevelt, where he admitted:

“As you know, the value of the orders already placed or being negotiated ... is many times greater than all of England's foreign exchange reserves. The time is approaching when we will no longer be able to pay in cash for ships and other supplies ... ”

Peace with the Germans would have been the most reasonable in this situation, but the Yankees needed a war in Europe. And Roosevelt reassured everyone at a press conference on December 17, 1940: "After all, no great war has ever been lost due to lack of money." And on December 29, he voiced another "historical" phrase, actually belonging to his adviser, the Jew Samuel Rosenman: "We must be a great arsenal of democracies ..." However, the situation was interesting - Roosevelt could not give loans to England, because she had not yet paid

off with America for its public war debts incurred in the First World War, also organized in the interests of establishing US economic power over Europe. And under the Johnson Act of April 13, 1931, debtors who failed to make payments due to them could not receive any loans in the United States. And then America "generously" agreed to give the British the opportunity to shed blood and tears in the name of America on the principle

lend-lease.

Lend-Lease was conceived as a system for the transfer by the United States to allied countries on loan or on lease of weapons, as well as military and other materials necessary for waging war. Roosevelt explained the idea of Lend-Lease to journalists this way: since England has nothing to pay for weapons, the United States will give them "for a while", like one neighbor gives another fire hose to put out the fire.

A gun is not a screwdriver, and a tank is not a hammer. Taken "for a while", they can immediately turn into scrap. But no one asked about this ... Everyone (and, above all, the Yankees themselves) admired the "nobility" of America. In vain that from the "fire hose" Lend-Lease gasoline was poured out to fuel the fire of war.

The British (and in general everyone whom the Yankees "made happy" with the Lend-Lease regime) had to pay after the war - either by returning the property received on loan, or by repaying the debt with goods, money, and other "acceptable for the United States" compensation such as trade and other concessions.

Actually, something similar has already been practiced - on September 2, 1940, the "neutral" Yankees exchanged their stale weapons "illiquid assets" for British bases. For the right to lease for 99 years bases in Newfoundland, Bermuda and the Bahamas, Jamaica, Antigua, Saint Lucia, Trinidad and British Guiana, the United States gave England half a million rifles left over from the First World War, several hundred of the same old guns and 50 old same destroyers.

Now the newest weapons, and Churchill in the House of Commons declared:

— The most powerful democracy proclaimed in a solemn statute the intention to devote its vast industrial and financial power to the cause of securing the victory over Nazism, so that peoples, great and small, could live under the shadow of security, tolerance and freedom ... Under the sun of the British Empire at that moment lived

many great and small nations deprived of freedom and security by the English, intolerant of opposition **to them** ... And given this indisputable fact, Sir Winston's parliamentary orgy looked disgusting hypocrisy.

Yes, and they were!

* * *

In MOSCOW, on March 22, 1941, at 1 p.m., Vyshinsky once again received Cripps and again - at his request.

"Mr. Vyshinsky," the Briton did not pull the lion by the tail, "last time, on March 6, I touched on the situation in the Balkans, and now I draw your attention to the situation in Scandinavia ...

And Cripps began to describe German activity already in Finland (where the Germans in quantities that mean something, then

observed). - My

wife was recently in Stockholm and was stunned by the anti-Soviet propaganda, benevolent towards Germany, - the British ambassador reported "in his own way". Our plenipotentiary Alexandra Mikhailovna Kollontai stayed calmly in

Stockholm, so we did not need to receive news from Sweden through the British branch of the international information agency OBS (One Woman Said). But Cripps had the audacity to drag his own wife in here ... And again he tried to push the USSR to "encourage an alliance between Sweden and Finland in order to counter the German threat." Such actions by Russia would really reduce such a threat - for England. Automatically increasing it for Russia.

Cripps left this time without much success, but just a few minutes after leaving the NKID he returned and asked for a second appointment.

"Mr. Vyshinsky, I have just received an urgent telegram from Eden and I am bringing it to the attention of the Soviet government.
statement...

The essence of the new provocations was that the British were doing poorly in the Balkans and London suggested that the Soviet Union "take immediate measures to encourage and encourage the Yugoslav government and the Yugoslav people in maintaining the present situation, that is, the position of neutrality and independence of Yugoslavia" ... The British themselves, by the way, they have already landed in the Balkans. After listening to the British ambassador, the Soviet deputy commissar promised to quickly transfer everything to the government. Indeed, at 10 pm on March

22, 1941, he received Cripps for the last time on this difficult day and

said:

- In connection with the questions raised by you, Mr. Ambassador, in our conversations today, I have the instruction to declare that at the present time, in the existing relations between the USSR and England, there are no necessary prerequisites and conditions for a friendly discussion of the questions raised ... Vyshinsky knew how to maintain the right tone - his school of life was excellent, and now he is in the best
diplomatic traditions,

politely but firmly told Cripps things that hardly pleased him: - You, Mr.

Ambassador, recently spoke about anti-Soviet propaganda in Scandinavia ... But in the USA, direct hostile acts are taking place on the part of the British Ambassador, Lord Halifax, causing political and economic damage to the interests of the Soviet Union . As a result, we could not import from the USA the machines, equipment and raw materials we needed ... Cripps tried to object. But,

as the extras on the stage say,
portraying the "noise of the crowd", what to say when there is nothing to say ?!

Excited and nervous, Cripps left the NKID mansion for good in an hour and a half.

And the EVENTS developed... On March 31, 1941, the offensive of the Italo-German troops began in Cyrenaica. Preparations for Operation Sonnenblume (Sunflower) had been going on in the OKH since January ... And this code name meant the strike of two of Rommel's panzer divisions in North Africa. The operation, against the background of everything else, did not look large-scale, but there were enough worries and troubles with it ...

Both General Halder and his officers had long forgotten about what is called normal life. Each seriously belligerent country is waging, as it were, three wars: at the front, in the

rear, and at headquarters. War on the front lines smells of blood, sweat and dirt. The war in the rear smells of sweat and tears. And in the headquarters, she smells of men's cologne, but this does not make it easier and easier - the share of a staff officer is also not easy if he does his job honestly. And honestly, being outside the front line, a staff officer can work out his bread only by constantly, round-the-clock involving himself in those problems, the solution of which he contributes. After all, the more carefully and detailed the headquarters worked, the less blood and sweat will be shed in the trenches ...

This was understood by Halder in Zossen, and by Rommel in Libya. Arriving in his new theater of operations in February, he began with reconnaissance, and it confirmed his assumptions: the British forces were greatly stretched in depth. According to the charters of the "genius" Tukhachevsky on

small forces were to sit at the front edge, and the main ones were to prop them up from the rear. The British also turned out to be "those" strategists, and Rommel realized that his strike should be as powerful and fast as possible. On the last day of March

1941, he began ... Against four British infantry divisions and a panzer division, Rommel had two panzer and one infantry division plus the remnants of the Italian troops that survived their winter retreat. In addition, he had himself in reserve - a considerable reserve in that situation. Immediately breaking the resistance of the British in the salt marshes between the oasis

of Marada and the coastal town of Ghasr El Brega, the Germans advanced along the coast of the Greater Sirte to Ajedabiya without meeting any resistance. April 4, 1941 Ajedabiya and the port of Benghazi were taken. In Benghazi, the Germans captured the military governor of Cyrenaica and the commander of the forces of the Western Desert, Lieutenant General Sir Philip Neame and the commander of the British forces in Egypt, Sir Richard O'Connor. The British were demoralized, and Rommel decided to cut off the entire mass of British troops in Northern Cyrenaica with a three-hundred-kilometer

throw across the waterless desert. The risk was great, besides, a long sandstorm began ... But the commander of the "Africa" corps opposed the elements of nature to the will and elements of his nature. In the operation that began, Erwin Rommel quickly earned the nickname "Desert Fox". But it could also be called, for example, the "Desert Cheetah", because in its actions it was very fast ...

Admiral Isakov said at a meeting in Leningrad at the end of the 40th year

So:

"The victorious French rested on their laurels... People who were bearers of the old doctrines were canonized... All the generals who remained in power automatically influenced the armed forces... Weygand, Petain, Gamelin — these are the "immortals" from the French Academy. And these "immortals" in quotation marks decided the fate of the army ... And the defeated Germany, on the basis of the new state order that was built by the Nazis, called to life completely new people ...

Please note that the Germans do not have canonized elders! And new people brought fresh ideas... Both old doctrines and old people were opposed by new people who worked on new doctrines on a new material basis... What Isakov said about the French could also be

attributed to the British. And an illustration of his opinion about the new German generals was the example of Rommel ... Rommel knew how to reasonably risk not only his troops and his reputation, but also his life, and during the operation he did not get out of the light connected "storm", following the advance of his troops from the air, giving orders sometimes literally from above, on the aircraft radio. As a result, the offensive did not stop for a minute in the direction of the coastal fortress of Tobruk. Halfway to Tobruk in the El-Melkili region, another 6 English generals and 2 thousand English soldiers fell into the

hands of the Germans. The British began to clear Cyrenaica, retreating east to Egypt so as not to be cut off. On April 9, 1941, Rommel occupied Bardia - this is already east of Tobruk - and crossed the Egyptian border. But the 5th Light Division, reinforced

by the Italians, could not take Tobruk. English troops were blocked in the fortress - up to one and a half divisions.

Yes, Rommel was not strong enough. And although there was still enough fuel and ammunition, there was not enough of what this fuel was poured into, and of what shells were spent from, there was not enough equipment.

And it was not enough because the British controlled the sea lanes, and many transports did not reach Africa, leaving instead of Benghazi to the bottom of the Mediterranean Sea ... It was risky to advance in these conditions, and on April 3, 1941, Hitler signed the OKB directive, where he ordered:

“The main task of the German Africa Corps is to secure the captured lines and tie up as many forces as possible in North Africa.

the English.”

The Chief of the General Staff, Halder, was, however, very dissatisfied with Rommel, on April 23, 1941, in his diary he called him

"a warrior gone crazy" and noted:

"Rommel does not at all correspond to the task assigned to him, as a commander. He rushes all day long over far-flung parts, undertakes reconnaissance in force, disperses his forces ... The motor vehicles are badly worn out. The tanks had to replace a large number of motors ... ".

But the point was not in the personality of the African commander, but in the availability of equipment, or rather, in its catastrophic shortage. And by April 15, 1941, the front line had stabilized near the Libyan-Egyptian border. And the fate of the English army "Nile", all of Egypt and the Suez Canal turned out to be directly connected with the "Russian" policy of the Fuhrer. Throwing the forces of the Reich on Russia, Hitler gave

England a respite in Africa. Having kept peace with Russia, he could deal England, if not a murderous, then at least a crushing, "African" blow already in the 41st year.

IN THE WHILE, England was determined to strike at the Reich **through** Greece and Yugoslavia. Yes, after the beginning of the Greek adventure of the Duce, the position of the Reich on the Balkan "face" of defense became more complicated, and Greece was primarily worried ...

In 1939, before the start of the war, Britain gave "security guarantees" to just about anyone in order to be able to intervene in the situation at the right moment. In addition to Poland, guarantees were given in April 1939 to Greece. But when Italy invaded its territory, the British refused the request of the Greek Prime Minister Metaxas to send troops to protect the island of Corfu and Athens. The Greeks were sent 4 squadrons of aircraft, and the British needed troops in the Middle East. However, on November 1, 1940, British units landed on the island of Crete, and this immediately improved England's position in the Mediterranean.

Nevertheless, until the spring of 1941, no important events took place in the Greek theater, and the decisive turn in military operations in one direction or another did not happen. The Italian troops fought poorly even on the offensive, and the Greeks visibly beat them up. But - no more than that. In

early March 1941, the Germans entered Bulgaria under an alliance agreement with it and began to prepare for an offensive against Greece. The command of the Greek army "Epirus" informed the Prime Minister Korizis that the war with the Germans was futile and that diplomatic negotiations should be started. However, the Prime Minister and King Georgios II hoped for London. At the end of March, the British Expeditionary Force began landing in Greece - the 2nd New Zealand and 6th Australian infantry divisions, the 1st British tank brigade and 9 aviation squadrons. These units were transferred from Cyrenaica just before Rommel's offensive. At the same time, the British stepped up pressure on Yugoslavia ...

And on April 6, 1941, the Germans from the territory of Bulgaria moved to Greece in the Thessaloniki direction. The first battles in the mountains on the line named after the former

Greek Prime Minister Metaxas became fierce - the Greeks entrenched themselves in rocky firing points on the Rupel Pass and blocked the 125th German regiment. However, the 2nd Panzer Division bypassed Lake Doyran with a flank bypass and already on April 9 took Thessaloniki. The Greek army "East Macedonia" capitulated. The tanks of General List moved in two divergent groups across ancient Hellas.

And soon the SS life standard "Adolf Hitler" occupied Yanina, so memorable to the readers of "The Count of Monte Cristo" ... The second group of two mountain rifle and one tank division quickly went to Olympus. On April

14, 1941, the Germans came into combat contact with units of the British Australian Corps, and soon the battles were already in the area of the famous Thermopylae Gorge ... Sonorous names appeared in combat orders, reports, staff diaries: Olympus, Larissa, Lepanto, Peloponnese ... On April 23, Halder wrote down V

diary:

"Our troops are advancing through Lamia to Thermopylae and crossed from the Volos region to the island of Euboea. IN

The enemy is still holding out at Thermopylae, but apparently these are only weak rearguards. The British burned their tanks ... "

On April 25, Thermopylae was occupied. The next day, the German paratroopers captured the bridge over the Corinth Canal and opened the way for their mobile formations to the Peloponnese. The paratroopers also saved the canal itself from destruction - an important route for the passage of ships. Athens fell on the 27th. An urgent, but - it must be

admitted - exemplary

evacuation of British troops to Crete began. Dunkirk went to the benefit of the British, and about 45 thousand English, Australian and Greek soldiers and officers were loaded onto the ships. King Georgios, together with the British, first went to Crete, then to Cairo, and finally settled in London.

SIMULTANEOUSLY with the invasion of Greece, the Germans launched an offensive against Yugoslavia - also from the territory of Bulgaria, which strategically bordered both Greece and Yugoslavia for the Germans.

The Fuhrer was forced to this by the very course of events that developed, however, not by gravity, but according to the English scenario, and developed transiently - like an avalanche descending from the mountains.

On the night of March 25, 1941, Yugoslav Prime Minister Cvetkovic and Foreign Minister Markovic left for Vienna, where they signed an agreement on Yugoslavia's accession to the Pact of Three. And on the morning of March 25, mass protest demonstrations began in Belgrade. Such a reaction on the part of the Serbs was not very logical - it was necessary to demonstrate against Cvetkovic, firstly, earlier. Secondly, Yugoslavia was not ready for the war either financially - technically, more than a million strong army was very weak, nor morally - the Croats did not get along with the Serbs so much that up to 40 percent of recruits were not at the recruiting stations.

There was another piquant moment here ... Someone tried to pass off Cvetkovic's Vienna visit as a secret one, but this trip itself, and the intention of official Belgrade to join the Pact of Three were not such a secret ... As early as March 22, 1941 (in parallel with the "goodwill Cripps), the Yugoslav envoy in Moscow, Gavrilovich, turned to the First Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Vyshinsky. "Mr. Vyshinsky," he immediately declared, appearing at the NKID mansion on

Spiridonovka, "can I inform the Yugoslav government," here Gavrilovich put his hand to his heart and assured, "in order of his personal impression, personal impression that the Soviet government is not indifferent whether or not Yugoslavia would join the Pact of Three, and that joining the Pact would have disadvantages... Gavrilovich had obviously rehearsed all this with Cripps. Very much this request of his, on an allegedly "personal" initiative, smacked of an anti-German and pro-English provocation. And the ambassador still bent this "personally his own":

— I believe that such a statement would be of great importance for the Yugoslav people, who at the present time think that the USSR is leaving the Balkans and Yugoslavia in the sphere of influence of Germany... And such an idea of your position must, in my opinion, be eliminated... Having heard this,

Vyshinsky dryly replied: - The position of the USSR on the Balkan issue is well known. As for your request, Mr. Gavrilovich, I will report it to my government.



So, once upon a time, Russia was dragged into Balkan problems alien to it by provoking the unfortunate student Gavrila Princip, who shot the Austrian Archduke Ferdinand ... Now it was not Gavrila, but Gavrilovich who tried to put the same principle into practice ... However, times have changed. Half an hour before midnight, Vyshinsky summoned the ambassador to his office and announced: "We have information that the

question of Yugoslavia's accession to the pact has already been decided and that the Yugoslav government has always supported

joining the "axis"... - But, Mr.

Vyshinsky... - No, Mr. Gavrilovich,

the question you raised is pointless. And it was on the night of March 22-23 of the real 1941.

NEVER, on March 27, 1941, the radical circles of the Serbian bourgeoisie, counting on the help of the British Expeditionary Force in Greece, carried out a coup d'état. The new cabinet was formed by General Simovic, a Serbian nationalist and commander-in-chief of the Yugoslav air force, which numbered four hundred aircraft, of which only two hundred were fit for something.

Simović dismissed Pavel, declared Peter II of age and stated that he did not want Yugoslavia to be involved in the war. In fact, it was clear that in foreign policy Simović would adhere to a pro-British orientation, and this was precisely what ensured Belgrade had a war with the Germans. And already on March 27, Hitler summoned Halder from Headquarters in Zossen and demanded a speedy entry into Yugoslavia. Actually, the British themselves forced the Fuhrer to do this - not being able to bring significant forces into the Balkans, they provoked the Balkan countries themselves into an armed struggle against the Germans. British tactics are traditional. On March 31, 1941, Chief of the British General Staff Dill arrived in Belgrade. With him was Anthony

Eden's personal secretary Dixon. On April 1, Eden himself arrived briefly from Athens in Belgrade. For two days there were negotiations between Dill and the British ambassador in Belgrade, Campbell, with Simovic, the Minister of War,

General Ilic, and Serbian General Staff officers. Dill persuaded Simovich to coordinate with Greece military and economic efforts to "repulse German aggression", which the British themselves had brought to the Balkans. On the same day, April 1, 1941, the Yugoslavs published a declaration by Foreign Minister Momcilo Nincic about

neutrality and brought it to the attention of all the great powers. And on the same day, the envoy Gavrilovich again came to Vyshinsky, now to complain: "Can you imagine, when I told Cripps about the

declaration, he
disappointed.

Why? "He didn't
even hide his displeasure, Mr. Vyshinsky!"
England clearly wants war!



And here Gavrilovich expressed an obviously personal (and not prompted from London) opinion and ... he was right. On April 3, 1941, the Greek Commander-in-Chief Papagos, the Commander of the British Corps Wilson and the Chief of Operations of the Yugoslav General Staff, General Jankovic, gathered at the railway station near the Greek border town of Kenali. The British really wanted war. And - as always, proxy wars for their interests. The Greeks and Serbs were afraid of war. However, she already went to them herself ...

Yugoslavia was beginning to disintegrate... But for the most part, the Serbs did not rise to fight - they, as always, were counting on Russia's intervention. After all, the protest demonstrations on March 25 were under the slogans "Better war than a pact" and "For an alliance with Russia."

Belgrade was counting on such an alliance, but the same alliance was counted on in... London, Washington. Therefore, pro-Russian slogans were written on the banners of the Belgrade demonstrators, often with English brushes and English paints. Russia could not stop the Germans, but such an attempt by her would have seriously quarreled with the Reich, and the Anglo-Saxons were counting on this! On April 2, 1941, the diplomatic correspondent of the United Press of America Koo met with the first secretary of the Soviet embassy in England and "confidentially" reported:

- Mr. Korzh, I just got from the Minister of Information Duff Cooper ... - And what was the
conversation about, Mr. Ku?

- Oh, a lot! He looks at the prospects of the Balkan front pessimistically, but he expressed himself interestingly about you ...
- That is? -

He said that he was convinced that you want the victory of the “**exhausted**” Axis ”and that the Germans are moving in this direction quite quickly - to your pleasure ... Such conversations were

conducted, of course, in order to increase Hitler's suspicions about the USSR. But our “alliance” with Yugoslavia could have strengthened these suspicions even more. And Simovich urgently turned to Moscow with a proposal to conclude a treaty of friendship and (do not fall off your chair, reader!) Non-aggression ... However, Stalin's hesitation was over. And he refused Simovich.

And on April 6, 1941, the 4th Air Force of the Luftwaffe launched the first strikes on airfields in the areas of Skopje, Nis, Zagreb and Ljubljana. Tank and infantry divisions of the 12th German Army crossed the Bulgarian-Yugoslav border in three places and began to move towards Belgrade, which was already bombed by 150 aircraft.

In the order to the soldiers of the South-Eastern Front about the invasion of Yugoslavia and Greece, Hitler wrote:

“Since early this morning, the German people have been at war against the government of the Belgrade intriguers. We will lay down our arms only when this gang of rascals has been unequivocally and decisively eliminated and the last Briton has left this part of the European continent, and these misguided people realize that they have to thank Britain for the situation. They should thank England, the greatest warmonger of all time... In accordance with her policy of having others fight for her, England once again tried to draw the German people into the struggle... Some time ago

German soldiers on the Eastern Front had dealt with Poland, an instrument of British policy. In April 1940, England again tried to achieve its goals by hitting Norway ... In an unforgettable struggle, German soldiers drove

the British out of Norway. Only a few weeks later, Churchill conceived, through the

British allies - France and Belgium - to strike at the German region of the Ruhr. The victorious hour of our soldiers on the Western Front has struck.

It is already recorded in the history of wars as the German armies defeated the legions of capitalism and plutocracy...

The new goal of the British warmongers was to implement a plan that they had developed at the beginning of the war ... Memories of the landing of British forces in Thessaloniki during the First World War tangled little Greece in the web of British intrigues.

I have repeatedly warned that England wants to send troops to South-East Europe, and said that this poses a threat to the German Empire. Unfortunately, the Yugoslav people ignored these warnings. I also patiently urged the statesmen of Yugoslavia of the absolute necessity of cooperating with the German Empire... After a long effort, we finally succeeded in securing the cooperation of Yugoslavia by its entry into the Tripartite

Pact, without demanding anything in return from the Yugoslav nation, except for its contribution to the establishment of a new order in Europe. At that moment, the criminal usurpers - the new Belgrade government - seized power in the country with the money of England and Churchill ...

When the British divisions landed in Greece, just like in the days of the World War, the Serbs thought it was time to capitalize on the situation... The battle on Greek soil is not

a battle against the Greek people, but against the archenemy, England, which

again trying to stir up a war in the southeastern Balkans, just as she tried to stir up a war in the far north last year. Therefore, we will fight shoulder to shoulder with our ally until the last Briton finds his Dunkirk in Greece ... "

On the very first day of the offensive, the Germans advanced 30-50 kilometers and began to cut off the lines of communication between Yugoslavia and Greece. On 10 April they made contact with the Italian allies in

Albania. Two days before, on April 8, 1941, TASS reported from New York:

"According to the Washington correspondent of the New York Times newspaper, various weapons are prepared in the United States for shipment to Yugoslavia, including 75-millimeter cannons, machine guns and bombs. Apparently, these materials will be sent to Yugoslavia on Yugoslav ships in the coming days.

The next day, April 9, Roosevelt addressed Peter II with a message, where he promised Yugoslavia all possible material assistance. The calculation here was clear and - as always with the Yankees - vile. Of course, no one was going to really save Yugoslavia, which was obviously weak and incapable of fighting - if the Reich had got bogged down there seriously, the German invasion of the Soviet Union, to which the Fuhrer was unanimously pushed by London and Washington, could have been thwarted ... But it was worth irritating Hitler as much as possible: the Anglo-Saxons there was still hope that Stalin would also intervene in the situation and thus make - finally - an open enemy

in the Fuhrer. Stalin,

however, remained silent. And

on April 13, Belgrade was taken. Yugoslav soldiers surrendered in brigades without a shot or simply threw down their weapons and went home ... Four days later, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs Tsintsar-Markovich and General Jankovic signed the act of surrender of the Yugoslav army ... The collapse of Yugoslavia united by Freemasonry became a fact.

Croatia, having annexed Sandzhak, Bosnia and Herzegovina with the consent of Hitler, received the status of a separate state, and Ustasha Pavelic came to power there. Slovenia partly became part of Germany,

partly part of Italy. Part of Vojvodina went to Hungary, a significant part of Macedonia - to Bulgaria, part of Kosovo was annexed to Albania, which, like Montenegro, was controlled by Italy.

Serbia, Banat and part of Kosovo were nominally ruled by the government of General Nedic, but in fact fell under the jurisdiction of the German military administration. And the occupation regime was established there very cruel. Soon Admiral Canaris arrived in Belgrade. He drove through the city and returned to the apartment

prepared for him on the north bank of the Danube in Semlin ... There were tears in his eyes - neither he nor his Anglo-Saxon friends expected that everything would end so quickly. Canaris was sullenly silent, then said to the adjutant: "I can't take it anymore, we're flying away..." "Where to?" Canaris waved his hand so emphatically that the adjutant,

Hearing a direct answer to the question, I ventured to suggest:

- To Spain? The

admiral still silently nodded his head in the affirmative. He urgently needed to discuss the current situation with London through secret channels, and he was in a hurry. Ten hours later, his plane landed in Madrid.

Chapter 5 The "Moral Communist" Mr. Matsuoka

All these troubles in the Balkans, however, could not stop the course of other small and large events. On April 15, 1941, Reuters reported from London that the latest four-engine "flying fortresses" arrived in England from the United States, reaching speeds of up to 480 kilometers per hour ... In addition to this, America sent military "volunteer" pilots to the Old World, to the English Island ". And on March 26, 1941, Japanese Foreign Minister

Yesuke Matsuoka reached Berlin from ... Moscow ... Such a "geography" of the starting point for the visit of the Japanese minister to the German capital was explained by the fact that he was going to Berlin and Rome to personally get acquainted with the new ally Hitler and meet with Mussolini, across the territory of the USSR. Prior to this, on March 24, Matsuoka, who made a brief stop in the Russian capital, had a conversation with Molotov. And it began just with the impressions of a long trip: - I thank you, Mr. Molotov, for

the reception and the journey through your country, - the minister greeted the Soviet premier. — It gave me pleasure... Besides, the journey along the Siberian railway was a good rest for me after a lot of work in Tokyo... — I am glad, Mr. Matsuoka, that your journey was pleasant and prosperous. - Yes! But I am

on my way to Europe to exchange views with the leaders of Germany and Italy on

matters relating to the tripartite alliance. "I believe you have good reason to meet with them. - That's right, Mr. Molotov ... Japan has concluded a pact that

is very important for its foreign policy, but there has not yet been a personal contact

between the leaders of the states - the entire exchange of views took place only by telegrams, and this cannot replace a personal meeting.

- Agree. "So

far, I only know Mussolini and Ciano, but I still haven't met Hitler and Ribbentrop ..." Matsuoka fell silent, glanced at the

calmly silent Molotov and added: "Our relations with you are also important for us, and I

would like this trip use for a better acquaintance also with the leaders of the Soviet Union ... In 1932, when I was in Moscow on my way to Geneva, I just got to the celebration of the fifteenth anniversary of the October Revolution, was at the parade on Red Square and talked with Mr. Kalinin for twenty minutes.

Molotov remembered that at that time Matsuoka was the representative of Japan in the League of Nations, and therefore nodded his head, and Matsuoka explained:

"I am convinced that our relations need to be improved... And personally, I took care of this thirty years ago, when I was a kind of chief of the General Staff for Count Goto. He always thought that Russia could be a friend of Japan...



Matsuoka spoke the truth. Count Goto, Mayor of Tokyo, organizer of the first Japanese Society for Friendship with the USSR, was indeed a staunch supporter of not only friendly, but even allied relations between the two Pacific powers. The current Prime Minister of Japan, Prince Konoe, was no stranger to such ideas. And the Japanese minister mentioned his longtime patron, of course, for a reason. And it was not without reason that he asked Molotov: "Since I'm officially going to Berlin and Rome, I didn't want to

to think that this trip is connected with negotiations in the USSR ...

- Where did you think? Molotov immediately asked.

— Oh, I'm being overwhelmed by the local American and English journalists. They show nervousness and are all interested - for how many days did I stay in Moscow? And I answer that I am passing through the USSR in transit. Matsuoka added a little guiltily:

“Excessive doubts and conjectures are useless... When I return to Moscow...” “Mr. Matsuoka,

what character to give to your trip depends on you yourself...” Molotov reassured him and asked: “How long do you think to stay in Berlin and Rome?”

“I think three or four days in Berlin and two or three in Rome. And on the way back I will stay with you, although I have to hurry to return home. - I'm ready to meet you. - And can I see Mr. Stalin? - When? “I could right now...” “Wait, please, I can handle it. And Molotov went to the telephone, which stood on a separate table.

Returning, he said: - Comrade

Stalin will be able to be in ten minutes. - ABOUT! the Japanese was amazed. But, quickly coping with excitement,

In anticipation of the arrival of Stalin, he turned the conversation to reminiscences:

“You know, Mr. Molotov,” he said laughing, “Marshal Yamagata foresaw as early as 1916 that there would be a revolution in Russia before the end of the World War and the House of Romanov would disappear, but no one believed him. Molotov also smiled and said: “In 1916, people

who knew Russia could well have made such an assumption, but...” he chuckled again, “precisely because of the knowledge of Russia, no one could say anything for sure. At this time, Stalin entered the office of the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars. Matsuoka jumped up first, Molotov also got up, and Stalin

approached them and simply said:

“I am glad to see you in Moscow, Mr. Matsuoka...”

THE MOMENT was, as they say, historical, but pathos and Stalin were things so incompatible that stiffness in conversation

did not occur from the very beginning.

"I have already been in Moscow, Mr. Stalin, and stayed for five days..." Matsuoka said. "But then I didn't have a chance to introduce myself to you and saw you only on the podium of the Mausoleum... And today I asked you to receive me so that I could pay my respects to you even before leaving for Berlin. "I am at your service, Mr. Matsuoka!"

- I do not intend to bore you with details, Mr. Stalin, I hope Mr. Molotov will give them to you, but on the way back, if you find it useful, I would like to discuss issues of improving Soviet-Japanese relations ... Convincing the need for this

I started thirty years ago. We can only welcome such intentions, and if our new meeting is necessary, then, I repeat, I am at your service.

"I'm glad ... Already in the thirty-second year, before my trip to Geneva, I raised the issue of the need to conclude a non-aggression pact with you and spoke with Minister of War Araki and Minister of Foreign Affairs Uchida, and they agreed, however," the Japanese threw up his hands, "Japan's public opinion was not yet mature at that time... Matsuoka hesitated, and then added:

- Now there is also a group of opponents, but we, together with Prince Konoe are firm.

Here he faltered again and after a short pause said pleadingly: "I

understand, Mr. Stalin, that you are very busy, and I cannot take up your precious time, however, if you could give me another twenty minutes, I would like to inform you two things that I would ask you to think about before my return from Berlin ... Stalin smiled through his

mustache and very politely replied: - You, Mr.

Matsuoka, are a rare guest, so I am ready to grant your request. The Japanese sighed, taking in more air into his lungs and determination...

- Mister Stalin! As you know, the supreme power in Japan is in the hands of the Tenno. In foreign languages, "tenno" is usually translated as emperor, but this is not true, because Japan has long had communism ...

Nkidov's interpreter, hearing this, looked in surprise at the Japanese minister, not knowing whether he had misheard or whether the guest had made a slip of the tongue,

but he repeated: "Yes, communism!" And I would call it moral communism. Stalin and Molotov looked at the guest with interest. And he explained: - Yes, we have capitalism ... However, there is no harm from this - all the property and life of subjects belongs to the Tenno, and no one does not regret it.

"But, Mr. Matsuoka," Stalin objected after listening to him. — Isn't this the way of the emperor?

- No! Tenno is a state, and everything belongs to him. True, after the industrial revolution, Anglo-Saxon traditions prevailed in our country and moral communism was damaged.

Matsuoka had in mind that "conservative Meiji revolution" of 1867, when in Japan, forcibly "opened" in 1854 by the American Commodore Perry after more than two centuries of self-isolation, the remnants of the shogun regime were liquidated and rapid capitalist development began. In the course of it, the Anglo-Saxons managed to gain influence among the new Japanese elite and frustrate a possible rapprochement between Russia and Japan. The result of the provocations of England and the USA was the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-1905, encouraged by the Anglo-Japanese treaty of 1902, and the Peace of Portsmouth, humiliating for Russia, ended it. It was concluded in the USA by an agent of influence of the Golden International, Count Witte—"Polu-Sakhalinsky", with the "assistance" of President Theodore Roosevelt, President Roosevelt's uncle Franklin Delano ... So, Matsuoka made quite unexpected speeches: - Now we have created a group - so far, however,

insignificant, which wants to spread the principle of "Hakkoiyu" policy to the whole of Asia, which means universal peace based on justice... We put forward the slogan - down with capitalism and individualism. But for this it is necessary to destroy the Anglo-Saxons. Matsuoka took a breath and finished: "For this purpose, the pact of the three powers was concluded. And if the Soviet side has a desire to go

together, then we are ready to go hand in hand with you ... And I ask you to think it over. And second..." Matsuoka was excited, but spoke firmly, "Regarding the war in China...

Japan is fighting there not with the Chinese people, but also with the Anglo-Saxons, that is, with England and America. Chiang Kai-shek is a servant of the Anglo-Saxon capitalists, and the Sino-Japanese conflict must be viewed from this angle... — Do I need to answer right away? Stalin

asked. "Oh, I just gave a general idea and would like to get an answer on the way back..." "I can answer briefly now, Mr. Matsuoka!" "Perhaps it would be better after my return?" "Well, if you like," Stalin did not insist, but nevertheless explained: "No ideology should interfere with the mutual improvement of relations and the practical rapprochement of states. And if in Japan they want the state to become the controller of individual capitalists, then this is good. This is already being done in Germany and Italy. And the state can be strengthened only when it is the complete controller of the entire people and all classes. As for the Anglo-Saxons ... - here Stalin stopped and looked at Matsuoka, who held his breath, - the Russians have never been their friends, and now, perhaps, they don't really want to be friends with them either ... Matsuoka sighed with relief. On the same day he left for Berlin.

AS ALREADY mentioned, on February 23, 1941, Ribbentrop met at his residence Fuschl with the new Japanese ambassador, General Oshima. Hiroshi Oshima was sometimes said to be more of a Nazi than the Germans themselves, and that was true. The general and the son of the general, the former Minister of War, Oshima was a tough, solid person and enjoyed Hitler's confidence. Ribbentrop was also disposed towards him, and now they spoke quite openly. "In London, a clique of warmongers has long prevailed," the German

recalled, "even when I was ambassador there ... That is why the Fuhrer decided to make an agreement with Russia - it was necessary to avoid a war on two fronts. "It was a blow to us," Oshima said bluntly.

The Japanese then really experienced such a shock that the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact caused the fall of the cabinet of Baron Kiichiro Hiranuma. "But, Herr Oshima, it was also in the

interests of Japan," the Reich Minister objected vividly, "after all, you also needed a confident victory for Germany ... Especially since I immediately told Stalin that the agreement between the Reich and Russia does not affect our relations. And now we have last year's Berlin Pact...

"Of course," agreed the Japanese, "although in Japan there were different opinions on this matter. Now, however, our dislike for America has intensified ... - This is understandable,

and we need to be frank with each other,
Mr. Ambassador.

- I agree, especially in the statements about the Yankees. "Exactly so," Ribbentrop confirmed, "because we have to keep America from entering the war. They don't like National Socialism there, but ordinary Americans instinctively feel that they want to sacrifice their sons for no apparent reason and that Roosevelt and his behind-the-scenes Jewish bosses are behind this... - And what is Stalin's position? Oshima asked. - Well, Stalin is a sober and intelligent politician, and he will not take any actions directed against us ... But for you, dear Herr Oshima, perhaps you should strike at the very center of the British Empire ...



Yes, the Germans would very much like this. On March 5, 1941, Keitel, Chief of Staff of the Supreme High Command, signed Directive No. 24 on cooperation with Japan, beginning like this:

"The purpose of cooperation based on the Tripartite Pact is to encourage Japan to take active military action in the Far East as soon as possible. Thus, significant forces will be shackled

Great Britain, and the center of gravity of US interests will be shifted from Europe to the Pacific Ocean ... ".

Although the German-Japanese alliance acquired new prospects after the coming to power of Prince Konoe's cabinet in July 1940, Japan was actually a wayward ally for the Reich. And the vast distances were not very conducive to genuine coordination of actions. So, in the winter of 41, the Reich had great difficulties with rubber. German industry produced 7,300 tons of Buna synthetic rubber per month. This was not enough, while the stocks of natural rubber, purchased earlier and imported through Russia, ran out by the end of February. 12 thousand tons were supposed to be delivered from Indochina and South America by ships - "blockade breakers". And another 25 thousand tons were purchased for the Germans by the Vichy French. But his export was prevented ... by the Japanese.

The East was a really delicate matter. And now the East is represented by the Japanese Foreign Minister affairs - was approaching Berlin.

On March 26, 1941, the Anhalt station in BERLIN was decorated with flags, flowers and dress uniforms of the Ribbentrop retinue - Matsuoka was greeted from Moscow. The

train gently approached the platform, and the door of the guest's saloon-car was exactly in front of the red carpet - a trick carefully verified by the Reich railway workers during long training sessions. Little Matsuoka appeared in the doorway - smartly dressed, wearing gold-rimmed glasses ... Black-haired, with a short hairstyle that opened his forehead, with thick eyebrows and a thick short-shaven mustache, he somehow subtly looked like the Fuhrer.

Ribbentrop moved towards him, and the scene immediately took on a somewhat comical character due to the difference in height and dimensions of the Reich Minister and the guest, and especially because of the two-meter head of the protocol department of the ausamt von Dernberg walking a little behind Ribbentrop.

Newsreel, singing children, a short respite in the "princes' room" at the station, and the cortege moved to the Bellevue Palace. The first meeting between Hitler and Matsuoka was to take place on 27 March.

The next day, gliding on the smooth marble floor of the vast hall of the Reich Chancellery, Matsuoka successfully covered more than a hundred meters distance to the large doors of the waiting room in front of Hitler's office. Further, the head of the chancellery, the Reichsminister Meissner, let only the elite pass. And after Matsuoka, only Ribbentrop, Oshima, and the Reich Ambassador in Tokyo, General Eugen Ott,

entered the office. Hitler, however, was very late - on the same day a coup began in Belgrade. However, when the Fuhrer appeared, the conversation dragged on. The main thing that the Fuhrer wanted from Matsuoka and Japan was a strike on the British base in Singapore in the near future. But this is precisely what Matsuoka could not promise - he already had a not very strong position in Tokyo, and Singapore meant, most likely, a real prospect of the US entering the war. On

March 29, 1941, Matsuoka spoke again with Ribbentrop. AND again the leading theme was Singapore, but against the backdrop of the "Russian" theme.

"Given the situation, I would not recommend that you expand relations with the Russians ... It is difficult to say how the situation will develop further," Ribbentrop warned Matsuoka. "But you can be sure, Herr Matsuoka, if Russia attacks you, Germany will move out immediately ... We already have enough divisions now."

in the east.

Matsuoka watched attentively and listened, absorbing every word, and Ribbentrop also strengthened the effect by

saying: - In any case, when you report to the emperor, you cannot say that the conflict between Russia and Germany excluded.

— What about the prospects for Russia to join the Pact of

Three? — This is a different combination... But the nerve of it remains the position of Russia towards Finland and Turkey... Actually, Herr Matsuoka, I can confidentially tell you my opinion about the true interests of the Russians...

Ribbentrop lowered his voice, as if someone other than Matsuoka and Schmidt's interpreter could hear him, and said:

- The Soviet Union wants the war to go on as long as possible ... The Russians know that they will not achieve anything with a military attack, and they are waiting. So such a cunning and experienced politician as Stalin, the rapid defeat of France was very inopportune. He would like a long war that would tire the peoples and pave the way for Bolshevik influence. Matsuoka readily nodded his head: "Oh yes... I can confirm this, Herr Ribbentrop, by the example of China. I maintain personal relations with Chiang Kai-shek... He knows me and trusts me, and therefore I know how he fears the further strengthening of the influence of the Red Army in China..."



As we can see, in assuring Stalin that Chiang Kai-shek in Japan is regarded as a servant exclusively of the Anglo-Saxons, the Japanese was cunning. But after all, even Stalin did not take Matsuoka's assurances at face value - Chan was well known in the USSR, he visited us more than once, and his son worked in the Urals (and was a member of the CPSU (b)). And our military-political ties with Chiang Kai-shek, the former head of the Whampu military school, organized with the help of instructors from the Red Army, continued for more than a dozen years. At the same time, it was well known in Moscow that Chiang had been good with the Japanese from a young age and had long-standing, excellent and influential acquaintances in Tokyo. The recognition of Matsuoka to

Ribbentrop once again confirmed not only that the East is a delicate matter, but also that one of the knots that held back a reasonable policy for Germany, Russia and Japan was tied in China.

Ribbentrop, however, was now more worried about Singapore, because it was the most tempting "carrot" for the subjects of the "moral communist" Tenno-Mikado. By reaching out for her, the Japanese would greatly facilitate the position of the Reich by the very fact that they would greatly complicate the position of the Britons. The strategic position of Singapore, located at the very tip of the narrow Malay Peninsula, stretching south from the vast Indochinese Peninsula, was beyond doubt. This English colony was the key to Indochina, to

Malaysia and the entire Sunda archipelago of hundreds of huge islands and small islets. From here it was convenient to operate both against India and against Australia.

English Singapore also reinforced the position of the Philippines controlled by the United States. Japanese Singapore would seriously threaten them, so there was something to dream about. And Ribbentrop

knew it. - Herr Matsuoka, -

he persuaded the Japanese, - you expressed fears that in the event of your operation against Singapore, the British Mediterranean Fleet and American submarines from the Philippines could intervene in the matter ...

Matsuoka nodded, and the Reich Minister said in a confident tone:

"Well, I have discussed the situation with Grand Admiral Raeder, and he assures that this year the British will be completely tied up in the Mediterranean Sea and in their inland waters, and American boats are so bad that you don't have to worry about that.

"Oh, we are worried about something else..." the Japanese replied. - The Japanese fleet, on the contrary, fears that the United States will not get involved in the conflict and this will drag out the matter for five years. And we need to quickly shake the Japanese so that they wake up ...

These words of the foreign ministers of the Reich and the empire of "moral communism" proved that they were both in a dangerous delusion, namely: they did not see the obvious fact that the Yankees, on the contrary, led the world to such a turn of events when America would necessarily and quickly enough enter into the war. And it will enter, equipped with excellent powerful aircraft, not so bad submarines, and other things. And that's exactly what you need to be afraid of.

The conversation, however, turned to the supply of rubber and the prospects business partnership. "I,

Mr. Ribbentrop, must openly admit," said Matsuoka, "that Japanese business circles are afraid of their German competitors, because they consider them very capable. Ribbentrop smiled contentedly and asked: "What about the others?" -

If you mean the British and Americans, then they

only make us smile... - And the
Russians?

"Oh, the political moment is important here! But not only him. I offered Molotov to conclude a non-aggression pact, and in response he proposed only a neutrality pact. And one more question - Northern Sakhalin. There are rich sources of oil, and the Russians are obstructing its production. And this concession can give us up to two million tons of oil ... So I will offer the Russians to buy Northern Sakhalin from them.

- Will they agree? -

Hardly ... When I hinted at this to Molotov, he immediately asked me if this was a joke ... What do you think - should I touch this issue deeply on the way back? — I don't think so, Herr Matsuoka... It is unlikely

that you need to be distracted by something, delaying the operation against Singapore... — Yes... Although it may take up to six months.

"But as a result, Herr Matsuoka, you will gain control of Yugo East Asia... Including over the Dutch Indies!

==

And a day later, Goering received the Japanese minister at Karinhall. Nazi No. 2 and the Chief Forester of the Reich played a rather decorative role here - his reception was arranged not so much as a business, but as a secular one. And, sitting in a luxurious dining room, where the table was decorated with massive silver and flowers, and one wall was all glass, Matsuoka peered thoughtfully at the still winter forest landscape behind the wall, at the tops of pine trees in frost ... And then he confessed to the Fuhrer's translator Schmidt, who served him

visit:

- It reminds me of Japanese paintings ... And the amazingly delicate pattern of pine crowns makes me homesick. And reminds me of my name. "Matsuoka" means "Pine Hill" in Japanese...

BUT THE Japanese guest with a poetic name did not have TIME for sadness - Rome was still waiting for him, meetings with the Duce, with Ciano

and with the Pope. Pope Pius XII was a staunch anti-communist and no less staunch cosmopolitan - not in the Christian (for Christ, they say, there is "neither Greek nor Jew"), but in the "golden elite" sense of the word. He talked with a Japanese Buddhist for an hour and a quarter, and it all came down to the fact that the interlocutors came to the conclusion that there was no chance of establishing an early peace, but it was necessary to pray to the Almighty for peace. However, just in case, Matsuoka informed the holy father that in China Japan was fighting not against the Chinese and China itself, but against Bolshevism, which threatened to spread in China and

throughout the Far East. "It is to be regretted," Matsuoka complained, "that America and England are on the side

of Bolshevism... If we remember that Matsuoka told Stalin that America and England are on the side of Chiang Kai-shek, then... Once again one could understand that Eastern people are special People.

However, Matsuoka, as a Buddhist, was not forbidden to lie to the highest hierarchy of C

On the other hand, the conversations with the old acquaintance Ciano and with the Duce himself were more substantive, but the essence of them was the same as in

Berlin ... The Duce resolutely declared: - We need to be completely clear about the importance of our opponents. Enemy number one is America. In second

place is Soviet Russia ... The Duce led the party here in agreement with Berlin. For Hitler, one thing was important regarding Japan - that she would not get involved in a new adventure in the Soviet Far East and thus would not tie her hands for operations in Southeast Asia, or rather, in the zone of the same Singapore. And the passages of the Duce had the main goal of supporting the Führer in besieging the Japanese ally and turning him from north to south,

from Khabarovsk to Malaya. This unity of Berlin and Rome made a powerful impression on Matsuoka, which he told the Führer at their last meeting on April 4, 1941. They again talked about the same thing: the US position in the event of a Japanese strike on British bases and possessions in the Pacific Ocean; prospects for war... And again - about America.

"I think that it will be possible to keep the United States from entering the war," the guest said to the Fuhrer, "but we must be ready for a five-year war in the equatorial and southern parts of the Pacific Ocean ... And your experience is important to us.

"We will share everything with you," the Fuhrer promised, "but you think correctly: it is desirable to avoid a conflict with America for the time being.

For the Reich, such a conflict would be disastrous, which Hitler hinted at. But Matsuoka shook his head: "However, it is

inevitable... I am considered a dangerous person with dangerous thoughts in Japan, but I think like this: Japan still has to fight if it goes to dominate the equatorial and southern zones of Asia and Oceania... Isn't it better to do it now, rather than later - under less favorable conditions?

"I understand you well, Herr Matsuoka," the Fuhrer supported him. He unfeignedly thought and in a heartfelt and sincere tone said: - We must take risks while we are young and

have the strength and energy ... But war still cannot be avoided! Providence loves the one who does not wait for danger to fall upon him, but goes to meet it! The Fuhrer paused again and finished: - I will not hesitate for a minute

and will strike back at any escalation of the war, regardless of which side starts it - Russia or America ... Two days later, Hitler gave the order to invade Yugoslavia and in Greece. London and Washington hoped that the USSR would support the Simovich

government in one form or another, but Stalin did not succumb to the provocation. And instead of the English escalation of the war in southern Europe, the Fuhrer managed to "curl" a direct conflict there. The war in the Balkans ended quickly. Although it was difficult to say - for how long ...

MATSUOKA remained in Berlin until 5 April. Moscow was ahead of him again.

Chapter 6. Spring of 1941: from Moscow and Tokyo to Baghdad

After Matsuoka's departure, Stalin summoned Zhdanov to Moscow and I discussed the state of affairs with him and Molotov for almost two hours.

"All these fables," he told them, "about 'moral communism' are a good thing, but this is from the realm of good wishes ... Nevertheless, without partners in the outside world, we cannot ... Who are our partners in Europe? In Asia? Generally in the world?"

Molotov was sullenly silent, and Zhdanov readily responded: - In Europe, in a big way - only Germany. - That's it ... - Stalin raised his finger. - That's why we refused to support the Yugoslavs ... They themselves chose their fate by contacting London, and we do not need to quarrel with the Germans because of them ... Hitler can be understood.

Molotov was silent, but Zhdanov nodded in agreement, but asked: "But what about in Asia, Comrade Stalin?" Can't we agree with Chan? "We have already tried to do this more than once,

Andrey Andreevich! How much they helped - both with money, and with equipment, and with people ... - Stalin sighed. - Our Chuikov is still sitting there as a military adviser, but Matsuoka, although he is cunning, tells the truth - in the end, Chiang Kai-shek looks at Washington ... The American Stilwell has been walking among his neighbors for a long time ... Chuikov is tolerated in Chongqing, but they curry favor with Stilwell ... And Chiang doesn't really quarrel with the Japanese either... Stalin sighed again and turned to Molotov: "Why are you silent, Comrade Molotov?" You see, "comrade"

Matsuoka

crammed into comrades-in-arms... Let's go?

- Only if he gives back South Sakhalin, - without accepting jokes, Molotov answered seriously. Stalin also became serious. - You,

Vyacheslav, of course, are right ... But in Asia we would need to focus on a bloc with the Japanese - under a number of conditions ... Let's say, if they agree to press Chan and not touch Mao ... Mao is still weak, but here we have a clear line: they say, Japanese gentlemen, Mao is with us, and if you

if you want us to go with you, then take our comrade communist Mao Zedong into the company ... He doesn't serve the Anglo-Saxons ... And if Chiang is such a servant of the Anglo-Saxons and an opponent of Japan, - here Stalin slyly narrowed his eyes, - let's say, let's reason with him all together ... Huh? "It would be nice," Molotov

smiled involuntarily. "Yes, it would be nice," Stalin agreed. "When Matsuoka returns, it might be too early to talk to him like that. But someday you will have to lead it ... Probably ...

Stalin pondered, then firmly stated: - One thing is clear - we can not have a stable alliance with England and America - they are simply not capable of honest alliances with anyone. Such a nature ... He puffed on his pipe, smiled: -

They want to assure the Germans that Stalin wants to win a weakened, "exhausted" de, "axis" ... The implication is obvious - let, they say, the Anglo-Saxons exhaust the forces of the Reich, and then Stalin will dictate conditions for him. The purpose of spreading such rumors is also obvious. "Yes," agreed Zhdanov. "But is the victory of the weakened," Stalin emphasized this word, "the axis" beneficial to us? Then we will lose a strong ally in the confrontation with the Anglo-Saxons. Molotov flashed his pince-nez in displeasure, and Stalin, noticing

this, he asked:

"What, Vyacheslav, are you dissatisfied with?" "It's too early for us to compete with the States, Comrade Stalin. Early, you say? I agree... But comrade," Stalin uttered this word with an inimitable complex intonation, "Hitler warned you last fall that countering the United States is not a task for 1945, but a task for 1970, 1980... Yes, the year 2000. of the year. "I won't live that long," Molotov threw ... "And I, even more so,"

Stalin agreed good-naturedly. - But the Fuhrer will not live, but he is thinking. And he does it right! The task is there!

On April 6, 1941, Matsuoka returned to Moscow, and
The next day Molotov received him for the first conversation.

On the evening of April 7, Matsuoka, the Japanese ambassador to
Moscow, General Tatekawa, and one of Molotov's deputies for the People's
Commissariat, Lozovsky, were sitting in the central box of the Bolshoi
Theater. On the stage the indispensable swans flapped their wings.
Matsuoka, however, sincerely liked the ballet. Tatekawa watched it not for
the first time and allegedly jokingly complained to Lozovsky (actually, his
last name was Drizo) about the People's

Commissar for Foreign Trade of the USSR Mikoyan: - It is very difficult
to negotiate with

Mr. Mikoyan about the purchase of Japanese silk ... - Well, he is our
first merchant in the country, and he

knows better," Lozovsky joked diplomatically. - But Mr. Molotov agreed
to buy three million yen worth of silk from us! But, Mr. Lozovsky, you
demand a lot of money from our fishermen. Now, if you bought canned
food from us at the prices that England pays ... Otherwise, we have
nowhere to sell our products!

"Well, Mr. Tatekawa," Lozovsky retorted, now covering up a serious
conversation with a joke, "you are not only a military specialist, but also a
cunning merchant!" If you want fish caught in our waters, you can sell it to
us, and even at the prices of the English market! All these wranglings were
based

on a long-standing sore subject - the fishing convention, to which
Russia was indebted to the rogue Witte-"Polu-Sakhalinsky" since the time
of the bad memory of the Peace of Portsmouth in 1905. And now Tatekawa
began to warmly remind Lozovsky that children, they say, must fulfill the
obligations of their fathers and that in Japan it has been so since ancient
times.

"Firstly, Japanese laws are not obligatory for us, Mr. Tatekawa,"
Lozovsky reasonably objected, "and secondly, we are our own ancestors
and therefore we will have to adopt a new fishing convention. Matsuoka
was nicknamed "Mr. One

Hundred Thousand Words" and "The Talking Machine" in Tokyo. But
that evening he was laconic and limited himself exclusively to theatrical
and ballet topics ... The first conversation with Molotov was not easy for
him, and he was all in

reflections on conversations yet to come and hardly any easier. However, the

minister told Lozovsky that he had seen in America famous Anna Pavlova, and then could not stand it and added:

"Mr. Molotov and I had an interesting three-hour conversation. And again the thread of the

conversation was pulled by Tatekava and Lozovsky. Only towards the end of the performance did Matsuoka say to the deputy

people's commissar: "It was cold in Moscow two weeks ago, but when I arrived in Berlin it was already hot there... Now it's warm here too. So you correctly noted at the station, Mr. Lozovsky, that I brought warmth with me.

"That's not surprising, Mr. Minister," laughed Lozovsky, - it seems to be hot in Europe now from all points of view?

Matsuoka couldn't help but sigh and admitted,

"Oh yes! Very hot.

APRIL 9, 1941, on Wednesday, Matsuoka and Molotov met for the second time ... After their joint dinner, the guest was taken to the Stalin Automobile Plant - ZIS, and then he left for Leningrad for the day. On April 11, the Red Arrow brought Matsuoka back, and he met with Molotov for the third time.

These conversations were worthy of the pen of Shakespeare or Bernard Shaw ... Both negotiators were experienced, stubborn and stubborn people - it was not without reason that Vyacheslav Mikhailovich had a maternal grandfather of a wealthy Vyatka merchant Nebogatikov ... that we are talking about improving relations for 50-100 years. At the same time, the Japanese did not consider it necessary to raise the issue of revising the ill-fated Portsmouth Peace. Molotov, on the contrary, emphasized that in the USSR they look

at this world in much the same way as in Germany they looked at the Treaty of Versailles. And in response to an offer to sell Northern Sakhalin, he offered

to the Japanese to sell Sakhalin South and some groups of the northern Kuril Islands to Russia.

To all appearances, the negotiations were coming to an end with no visible results. Matsuoka wanted to conclude a pact, Molotov demanded in return for the rejection of the Sakhalin concessions ... And neither one nor the other yielded.

The day of April 12, 1941, began with the Japanese guest from two institutes of the Academy of Sciences, continued with the Trekhgornaya Manufactory factory, and in the evening he was taken to the Moscow Art Theater. "Three Sisters" were walking, Olga uttered her last monologue and exclaimed: "It seems that a little more, and we will find out why we live, why we suffer ..."

Chekhov was loved in Japan. He was not alien to the former colleague of Count Goto, so Matsuoka completely surrendered to the charm of the theatrical performance - especially since he had nothing else to do.

Olga uttered the last line of the play: "If you only knew, if you only knew!", the curtain fell on the stage, and Matsuoka still did not know that his true Moscow visit was just beginning.

But right from the theater, the Japanese was invited to Stalin. From their almost two-hour conversation, a talented playwright - the same Anton Palych Chekhov - could make the plot both dramatic and comic, although in the Kremlin there was not, as in Berlin, a two-meter protocol retinue with a small guest, but they spoke a Russian Bolshevik with a famous pseudonym "Stalin" and the Japanese "moral communist" named "Pine Hill" about quite serious things. The comedy was in Matsuoka's attempts to be so ingenuous that sometimes he actually turned out to be somewhat naive. However, people who knew him closely, indeed, considered him the ability to "get drunk on his own ideas about things."

Naturally, the guest began with courtesies: "I am grateful to you, Mr. Stalin, both for the reception and for the fact that you agreed to accept me again. - It's my duty! "Mr. Molotov has

probably already reported to you that during my stay in Moscow I wanted to conclude a neutrality pact, without any preconditions, in the form of a diplomatic blitzkrieg ... But," here Matsuoka sighed, "my desire is not

crowned with success ... Tomorrow I leave your capital, and I am very annoyed that the pact has not been signed.

Stalin silently spread his hands - they say, we would be happy, but not everything depends on us. Matsuoka justified his nickname "One Hundred Thousand Words" today and did not skimp on words:

- Still, staying with you gave me a lot ... I knew old Russia and saw it again eight years ago ... Your successes are impressive! And our two meetings, Mr. Stalin, gave rise to such a feeling in me that I began to consider myself close and familiar to you ... And I feel the same in relation to Mr. Molotov.

Stalin thanked the guest with a polite bow, who said: "Yesterday I invited Mr. Molotov to Japan. After all, personal visits and return visits are also part of diplomacy and

very important...

Stalin nodded his agreement, but Matsuoka asked permission to speak on five points. The first concerned the treaty with the

Reich - according to Matsuoka, it could only improve Soviet-Japanese relations (which, in fact, was true). The second... We will learn about the second a little

later, but the third and fourth were connected with Matsuoka's conviction of the need to get rid of the Anglo-Saxons and the "agent of Anglo-American capital" Chiang Kai-shek, who was still supported by the USSR in his sluggish war with the Japanese. The fifth was again "moral communism". Matsuoka agreed that capitalism, which

came to Japan more than half a century ago, brought many social diseases, but he believed in the victory of moral communism in Japan. At the same time, he did not hide the fact that he did not agree with political and social communism, and suggested that Russia "together expel the influence of Anglo-American capital from Asia," and then see whose communism is better: Russian or Japanese? "I always speak and cooperate frankly, without dealing with trifles and huckstering," the guest declared. - And from a

young age I had the conviction that the fate of Asia is decided by two forces - Japan and the USSR. It's better for us to go hand in hand than to quarrel. Here, "from the point of view of big problems," Matsuoka proposed

us to solve pressing issues. This was the second moment.

“Small issues can be sacrificed,” the “communist” “Pine Hill” convinced the communist Stalin and explained: “If such a small island as Sakhalin sank in the sea, this would not affect Japanese-Soviet relations. And I offered Mr. Molotov to sell us the northern part of Sakhalin. You don’t agree... Stalin went up to the huge map — the most striking and important part of the interior of his office — and gestured for the guest to approach it: — Look, Mr. Matsuoka... Japan is holding

hands all the exits of the Soviet Primorye to the ocean.

Stalin pointed and listed: - At the southern cape of Kamchatka - the Kuril Strait ... South of Sakhalin - the La Perouse Strait ... Korea - the Tsushima Strait ...

Stalin smiled and asked: - Do you want to strangle us, Mr. Matsuoka? What kind of friendship is this? Matsuoka, not

embarrassed and not answering anything directly (for there was nothing to answer), declared:

- But this is necessary to create a new order in Asia ... And we would not mind if the Soviet Union went through India to the warm seas of the Indian Ocean ... If the USSR wants to have the port of Karachi, Japan will turn a blind eye to this. But we need to have a pact... And Matsuoka again turned to the problem

of the pact, while carefully avoiding such sharp corners as the factor of the Mongolian People's Republic, the puppet Manchukuo, the Sakhalin concessions and the fishing convention. “Mr. Matsuoka,” said Stalin at last, smiling all this time. “You have convinced me that

there is no diplomatic game in your words about the pact and that Japan really wants to improve our relations...

“I have the same impression,” Molotov put in a word. - So that's great!

Stalin was still smiling. I enjoy listening to a person who speaks directly about what he wants. In our time, and not only in our time, you rarely meet a diplomat who would frankly say what is in his soul ...

Matsuoka flourished as the translation progressed, and Stalin praised everything
guest:

- Even under Napoleon, Talleyrand said that the language was given to a diplomat in order to hide his thoughts. We, Russian Bolsheviks, look differently and believe that it is possible to be sincere and honest in the diplomatic arena... Matsuoka listened, flourished,

and Stalin went on to the point: "Mr. Matsuoka! We are not against honest pacts. We would even be ready to expand the Pact of Three to Four, about which Comrade Molotov spoke in Berlin to Messrs. Hitler and Ribbentrop. But the Pact of Three is a pact of mutual assistance, and Herr Hitler declares that he does not need military assistance. Therefore, we in the USSR believe that only if things go badly for Germany and Japan can the question of a pact of four arise ... Stalin stopped smiling and fell silent, and then Matsuoka heard

the words they've been waiting for so long:

- I will also tell you honestly and frankly: I am a staunch supporter of the Axis countries and an opponent of England and America ... But much can be said only in the future. But our neutrality pact with you is needed right now ... This question is ripe. For thirty years, Mr. Matsuoka, Russia and Japan have looked at each other like enemies. There was a war between Russia and Japan. Peace was made, but peace did not bring friendship. Therefore, I agree with you that if the neutrality pact is concluded, then this will really be a turn from enmity to friendship ... But ... Matsuoka, who listened to Stalin fascinated, shuddered, and Stalin

explained:

"But I think you will need to exchange letters with Comrade Molotov, where the controversial issues would be reflected, in particular, about the need to liquidate concessions. Matsuoka was not up to "little things"

now, and he quickly agreed, and then once again tried to return to the topic of Sakhalin:

- Mister Stalin! It is not clear to me why the USSR with such a huge territory does not want to cede territory in such a cold place ... - And why do you need these cold places,

Mr. Matsuoka? - This will create calm in the area ... And in return we agree to the exit of the USSR to the warm sea ...

Although Stalin did not hang over Matsuoka, he was still noticeably taller than him. And, answering, he looked very much like a patient teacher condescendingly admonishing a playful, sly student.

"Mr. Matsuoka!" This will give peace only to Japan. And the USSR will have to wage war for warm seas. Right here," Stalin, for clarity, pointed to India with his hand and calmly added: "This is not good. "But we could deliver what you need from

here," Matsuoka pointed with a miniature finger at the Indonesian region, "for example, rubber ... We want to help you, not

interfere.

"Take Northern Sakhalin," Stalin objected weightily, "this is means to interfere with our lives.

And the conversation turned to amendments to the text of the exchange letters between Molotov and Matsuoka, and then the Japanese asked for an order to be given to the Central Telegraph, so that his telegram to the emperor, asking for authority to sign the pact, should not be delayed for a single minute. "We'll do it now," Molotov reassured him.

On April 13, 1941, which corresponded to the 13th day of the fourth month of the 16th year of the Showa era, Vyacheslav Molotov for the USSR and Iosuke Matsuoka and Yoshitsugu Tatekawa for Japan signed the Neutrality Pact in the Kremlin. So, the diplomatic blitzkrieg did take place... The last stage of Matsuoka's visit began - the farewell banquet. Both the guests and the hosts drank a fair amount at this banquet - Molotov taught Matsuoka to sing "The reeds rustled ...", and the Japanese did well. Yes, and there was a reason for the banquet, no doubt, suitable - the deed was done serious and not approved by everyone in Japan. Matsuoka was afraid that this pact could cost him his life as a result of someone else's assassination attempt, and this, of course, also affected his desire to relax ... As, probably, the fact that, being sick with tuberculosis, he, not without reason, believed that he had time to do something very significant under the possible speedy curtain of life.

Peel and Stalin, not committed to alcohol. But he also had to relieve tension, especially since he still had to complete the blitz epic with a new pact with a spectacular ending.

Even at the beginning of the banquet, when everyone was holding glasses of champagne in their hands, Matsuoka, under the flashes of a reporter's magnesium, took Stalin's arm and took pictures with him like that ... Molotov stood nearby and smiled. Stalin knew how to call a person to frankness, and Matsuoka, and even drunk, passionately

repeated: - The contract has been concluded, and I am not lying. Lie - take my head. A you lie, Mr. Stalin, I will come for your head!

The Russian leader, who never lost his head anywhere, reassured him: -

My country needs my head, and yours, Mr. Matsuoka, - yours. So let's keep our heads...



Lozovsky went to the station to see off the guest with the chief of protocol, Barkov, and others. There was also a friendly diplomatic corps, although the Anglo-Saxons were conspicuously absent.

Matsuoka could barely stand on his feet, the official ceremonies were over, but for some reason the train was not sent, and the delay became almost an hour ... Not understanding what was the matter, unable to explain anything to the Japanese, Lozovsky and Barkov were nervous. And suddenly appeared on the platform ... Stalin and Molotov. Everyone, except perhaps Matsuoka, instantly sobered up: this has never happened before! Stalin himself - and sees off! Personally!! Yes, and not the head of state, but only a minister, albeit foreign affairs. Stalin approached the departing guest,

and when he realized WHO came to see him off, fell on Stalin's chest. The moment was ... Well, in short, it was an unforgettable moment for everyone. And Stalin, holding Matsuoka in his arms, distinctly said: - We are Asians and must stick together ... - And then he added: - European problems will be solved in a natural way if Japan and the Soviet Union cooperate ...

- Not only European, but also Asian, - I almost cried
Matsuoka, and Stalin confirmed:

- Yes! The whole world will be
equipped. And Matsuoka was already hugging
Molotov. Stalin inquired loudly: "Where are the Germans?" - and, seeing
Schulenburg and Colonel Krebs, who was replacing the absent military attaché,
General Kestring, he approached them and hugged the German ambassador by
the shoulders. "We must remain

friends, Herr Schulenburg, and you must now do everything for this!" he said
to the stunned count. Then Stalin turned to Krebs, peered at him, at his uniform,
asked

to be sure: "Are you a German?" - and after that he said to him: - We will
remain friends with you in any case.

==

Molotov, on the other hand, put the Japanese into the car, and he, having gone inside,
leaned out the window and, waving a white handkerchief, repeated through his tears:

- Thank you, thank you!

The train started moving and began to pick up speed quickly.

The Anglo-Saxons were also gaining momentum ... Just during the period of
Matsuoka's visit to Europe - on March 27, 1941 - secret Anglo-American staff
negotiations were held in the States, where an agreed report on the coordination
of military plans of the USA and England (ABC-1 plan) was adopted. And in early
April, the

Yankees landed on the world's largest island of Greenland and began to build
their weather stations, naval and air bases on the west and east coasts. The United
States had "bird" rights to this, but Greenland was a disputed territory for a long
time.

In 1814, when the Danish-Norwegian Union was dissolved, the island was left to Denmark, and in the 60s of the 19th century, the same US Secretary of State Seward, who snatched her Russian America from Russia, tried to buy Greenland from Denmark. In 1931, Norwegian forces, sent by the then Minister of War of

Norway Quisling, occupied the eastern part of the island, but the "Permanent Court of International Justice" in The Hague, after sorting out the Danish-Norwegian conflict, recognized Danish sovereignty over the entire territory of Greenland in 1933.

After the occupation of Denmark by the Wehrmacht, the authorities of the island "turned" on May 3, 1940 to the United States with a "request" to take it under American control. Under the pretext of protecting cryolite mines, this was done, and the "Agreement on the Defense of Greenland", signed on April 9, 1941 in Washington by the Danish envoy Kaufman, became a fig leaf ... ("occupied" by the Germans, Denmark retained its former diplomatic relations, including with the Reich, and from the USSR). However, the Danish government did not authorize Kaufmann to do anything like that and refused to recognize the "agreement".

The Yankees, however, occupied Greenland, making Narsarsuaq on the west coast and Angmagsalik on the main air bases. east.

On April 11, 1941, the Yankees also introduced a "safety zone" in the Atlantic and increased naval patrols there. And on April 15, General Halder noted in his official diary:

"Roosevelt's statement that Greenland belongs to the Western Hemisphere is nothing more than an attempt to make it easier for the British to escort their transports."

Roosevelt had in mind, of course, the Monroe Doctrine, eternally young for the Yankees, which proclaimed the Western Hemisphere the patrimony of the Yankees. Greenland, although lying west of Greenwich, belonged to a country in the Eastern Hemisphere, but could Roosevelt be embarrassed by this! And now the operational zone of the submarine war was completely lost in the polar ice.

This was done for a reason - the Anglo-Saxons were increasingly at risk of falling into an increasingly difficult situation not only in Europe, but also in Asia, and then in Africa: on April 1, 1941, an anti-English uprising began in the Iraqi capital of Baghdad. And it developed successfully. On April 2, a new nationalist government was formed in Iraq, headed by a Baghdad lawyer, former head of the royal office, Rashid Ali al Gailani. For the British, it was a blow in the stomach. Iraq meant a

lot to them, also because its potential importance was of paramount importance not only for England, but also for Germany. The land of Iraq is an ancient land, a biblical land... The interfluvium of the Tigris and Euphrates, Babylon, Assyria, Mesopotamia – this is all Iraq.

In its modern form, by the beginning of the 40s of the XX century, Iraq was created after the First World War under the Treaty of Sevres - formally as an independent state. But soon, almost incessant protests against the British, who actually occupied Iraq, led to the fact that Iraq was declared a British mandated territory. And there was reason to break spears - the strategic position of Iraq is revealed at the very cursory glance at the map. It is located between Syria (at that time a French mandate), English Transjordan and Iran in the direction from west to east, and between Turkey and Saudi Arabia of the Arabian Peninsula in the direction from north to south. In the Basra region, which lies just below the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates, Iraq opens up to Kuwait and the Persian Gulf with important anchorages of the British military and merchant fleet; In the 1930s, an imperial air route ran through Iraq, connecting the metropolis and its main colonial "pearl" - India. And the English concept of Iraq was formulated by Lord Curzon as follows: "The Euphrates is the border of India." This zone has long been a conflict zone between Britain and Germany - since the time of the Baghdad railway

project, which was supposed to connect Berlin with Basra and was almost completed before the First World War - there was an unfinished section of 500 kilometers.

After the war in Iraq, as already mentioned, the British established themselves. Established by fire, iron and blood, but not legally. The "democratic" West regretted the diplomatic ink on Iraq - the terms of the English mandate were never established by the League of Nations, and England was simply given complete freedom of action in these territories. The Iraqi leaders tried to refer to the famous 14 "peaceful" clauses of the declaration of US President Woodrow Wilson, which proclaimed the right of nations to self-determination, but... But democracy is something that only the Anglo-Saxons can afford,

and even then not all, but only those from them who have enough dollars or pounds sterling ... Nevertheless, in Iraq one uprising after another had to be crushed, calling for this troops even from India. The Kurdish problem also became significant - the Kurds were very numerous, although scattered over a large territory.

It ended up that in 1920 the British created a "national council", and on June 23, 1921, the son of the sheriff (ruler) of Mecca, Emir Faisal from the Hashemite dynasty, after a "popular referendum" that gave 96% of the vote in his favor, was crowned as king Iraq. And after that, Britain could suppress anti-English speeches already on "legal" grounds - at the request of the "national monarch".

Requests each time were not long in coming, for Faisal was an English protegee in its purest form. During the First World War, with the assistance of Lawrence of Arabia, he led the Arab rebel detachments that fought against the Turks, and in 1920 he was proclaimed - "at the suggestion" of the British - at first the king of Syria. However, in the end, France received a mandate for Syria, and Faisal turned out to be a retired king. But, as you can see, not for long.

On July 30, 1930, the Anglo-Iranian "treaty" was signed, which finally "legitimized" England's right to Iraq as its total military base, and on September 9, 1933, King Faisal I died, leaving the throne to his 21-year-old son Ghazi, who on May 2 In 1935, a son was born, crowned on April 4, 1939 - after the death of Gazi - under the name of Faisal II. In reality, the pro-English regent Abdul Ilah acted on his behalf - also a Hashemite prince, in

bloc with the pro-English grouping of Nuri Pasha al-Saida. This colleague of Faisal I and Lawrence served in Iraq either as Minister of War or as Minister of Foreign Affairs. In 1935, the

tribes in the Euphrates valley raised another anti-British uprising under religious slogans. However, the slogans soon acquired a completely secular character: a revision of the 1930 treaty, a change in the conditions for foreign concessionaires, and the abolition of peasant debts. The Central Committee of the Anti-Imperialist Front was formed, where the Iraqi communists were also represented (an underground party and, in fact, almost invisible in Iraq until then). The uprising was crushed, and in 1936

the bourgeois National Reform Party, headed by Hikmet Suleiman, already carried out a successful coup and, together with that part of the officers who leaned towards the ideas of fascism, formed their own government. Nuri Said fled Iraq, but a new coup of 1937 - already pro-British - overthrew Suleiman and returned Said to the country.

The instability in Iraq was understandable: Iraq has long become synonymous with oil... Actually, the word nafta itself comes from the Persian word meaning "leak". The vilayets of Mosul and Baghdad were especially rich in oil. The British had the main concession here, but both the Anglo-Dutch Royal Dutch and the French had already seriously wedged into Iraq, and - how could it be without it! American Standard Oil. England

accounted for almost thirty percent of Iraqi exports and nearly ten percent for the British colony of India. Almost 29 percent of exports were to the United States. Imports for a third came from England and India. America had a more modest position here - 11 percent, but more than 19 percent of foreign imports were provided by Japan.

In 1934, the laying of an oil pipeline to the Mediterranean Sea was completed. From Kirkuk to Hadita there was a double "thread", and from Hadita it branched into French - through Syria to Tripoli in Lebanon - and English - through Palestine to Haifa. In 1938, oil production amounted to 4.3 million tons. This was a lot for a country with a small, in general, population - one Iraqi accounted for more than a ton of oil produced per year.

When France fell in 1940, the Vichy government retained its influence in Syria and Lebanon, and London and Washington had another problem - Iraq. Since the time of Lawrence of Arabia in the Arab East, England has been treated differently in different regions, but the sympathy of the Arab masses for the Britons was in inverse proportion with economic development and oil wealth: the more oil-bearing the Arab lands were, the worse those who treated the sons of Britain inhabited these lands.

And the most oil-bearing region of the Arab world was then Iraq.

By the way, in Egypt, the twenty-year-old King Farouk I was also cool towards the British, but towards Germany - more than not bad, for nothing that he received his education in England (or maybe just for that reason). Farouk came to the throne in 1936, and already in that year an agreement was signed to end the British occupation of Egypt, although the country remained completely dependent on the British. In addition, the pro-British Wafd party dominated the political life of the country.

In January 1938, Farouk removed the Wafdist government from power and formed a pro-German cabinet. True, under pressure from England, Farouk had to break off diplomatic relations with Germany in September 1939, and with Italy in June 1940, but he did not declare war on them. The Egyptian king - like the Egyptian masses - saw the enemy in England. Yes, and the Shah of Iran, Reza Shah Pahlavi, was friendly to the

states of the "axis". But with Iran, the situation was special - on January 26, 1921, at the initiative of Lenin, a Soviet-Persian treaty was signed with such a 6th article, which effectively blocked anti-Russian forces in Iran. This article provided that if any third power tries to turn the territory of Persia (since 1935 - Iran) into a base for military actions against Russia, then the RSFSR (and later - the USSR) will have the right to send its troops to the territory of Persia in order to

take military action in the interests of self-defence. After the danger was eliminated, we undertook to completely withdraw the troops.

And Reza Shah was always forced to look back at this 6th article, although in 1938 he concluded the anti-Soviet Saadabad treaty with Turkey, Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as the Iranian-German trade agreement, without extending the Soviet-Iranian one in the same year. trade agreement. In 1940, Germany's share in

Iran's exports approached 50 percent (imports - 26 percent), England - 9.3 and 7.7; USA - 11.6 and 6.6; India - 7.1 and 10; and Japan, 6.6 and 15.7 percent.

At the same time, more than 10 million tons of oil were produced in Iran with a population of fifteen million. And it was mined, we note, by the Anglo-Iranian company. That is, for the outside world, Iran, like Iraq, was also synonymous with oil (it accounted for 2/3 of the total amount of exports, followed by raisins and fruits, as well as cotton and wool).

Let us return, however, to Iraq...

When Anthony Eden came to Egypt in the winter of 1941, the Iraqi prime minister also came to meet him. It was then that it was agreed that the British would create a large bridgehead in Iraq to block the advance of the Germans to Mosul oil through Greece and Turkey, to protect the oil fields and the oil pipeline, and also to protect air communications through the airports near Baghdad and Basra. It was implied without words that it would also be possible to carry out raids on Russian Baku from bases in Iraq - the British had such plans in the winter of 1940.

Formally, England did not need Iraq's consent - its hands were untied under the 1930 treaty, but ... But Iraq was already worried, and it was necessary to enlist the assistance of official Baghdad.

THIS is how political cards fell on the map of the Near and Middle East by the spring of 1941. It was the Iraqis themselves who mixed these cards in a successful coup. It was prepared by Arab patriots in cooperation with the Axis powers, but it also had a serious

internal support in the form of a long struggle within the ruling circles of Iraq. The pro-British group was headed, as before, by Nuri Said, and the opposition by Gailani.

After the outbreak of war between England and Germany, the government of Nuri al-Said broke off diplomatic relations with the Reich, and on September 12, 1939, a state of emergency was introduced in Iraq. In March 40, al-Said resigned, which did not save the situation. And on April 1, 1941, the National Defense Committee was created in Baghdad, in whose hands all power in the country passed in two days, with the exception of British military bases with a few garrisons. Regent Abdul Ilah, together with the young Faisal, fled first to Habbaniyah, then to Basra and, finally, to British Transjordan. On April 3, 1941, Gailani formed a new

government and immediately formally turned to Berlin for support. In fact, Gailani's supporters said they would just not let the British bring Iraq into the war. Iraq, they say, intends to remain neutral and therefore will not allow England to introduce large military formations into the country. And so, they say, Iraq does not object to the 1930 treaty and wants to settle all disputes with England peacefully. But the appeal to Hitler spoke for itself ... Gailani could not help but understand that, by

opposing England, he was making a tough and hot mess - after all, German diplomats, journalists, "experts" of the Reich intelligence services and industrialists with the outbreak of hostilities in Europe increasingly flooded Turkey, Iran, Iraq. German officers were also in Syria, whose High Commissioner, General Dentz, was a supporter of the Vichy Marshal Petain and the idea of an authoritarian state. Hitler instructed to send to Iraq the best weapons and a mission led by F. Grobba, the intelligence

officer and envoy of the Reich in the capital of Saudi Jiddo. High-ranking officers were supposed to accompany Grobba. Assistance was supposed to be sent through Syria, where Dentz was in charge. In addition, Admiral Darlan, Commander-in-Chief of the French Naval Forces, declared that

he was ready to come out with Germany against England on certain conditions. And this fact became

especially significant given the fact that by the spring of 1941, out of 18 thousand French sailors who ended up in England after the surrender of France, more than 17 thousand returned to France (both to the occupied zone and to the Vichy zone).

The difficulties of the British were visible, I must say, not only to them ... On April 21, 1941, our plenipotentiary in Iran, Filimonov, received the newly appointed Japanese envoy to Iran, Ishikawa, who flew from Tokyo to Tehran via Indochina and Baghdad. All the preliminary information made it possible to assume that the new envoy was a good specialist in Russia and the Soviet Union, and this gave the meeting a special meaning. The times were troubling, and the small talk quickly turned into

conversation is businesslike and frank.

- Even from Tokyo, Mr. Filimonov, it is noticeable that anti-English sentiments are intensifying in Iraq, Egypt, Syria and Palestine ...

"I won't argue," the plenipotentiary agreed. "And it ultimately benefits the Germans. "Undoubtedly... If, of course, they can use situation to the fullest.

- Yes ... Therefore, the British are beginning to realize how difficult it will be them to protect their interests here in the East.

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Ishikawa looked at him questioningly. The USSR had an agreement with Iran that allowed the Russians to intervene in the situation in the most decisive way. But how will the Russians behave? Will they help, at least politically, the Reich, or will they behave in such a way that this will be the actual support of Britain? And the Japanese cautiously probed the mood of the Russian colleague:

- The British are forced to curtail their assistance to Yugoslavia and Greece - they cannot keep the Germans there. They should now keep Egypt, their main supply base for food and raw materials in this war. After all, they understand that the Germans are increasingly directing their

eyes towards Africa. Filimonov was silent, listening to the diligent English Ishikawa's speech, and he continued:

If England loses Egypt, she loses the war. And so she concentrates troops on the outskirts of it, exposing everything else. And yet every evening at 9 o'clock the British assure the Iranians and Indians by radio that the British troops are winning many victories. Filimonov, in order not to remain silent, assented: - I think they understand that their positions in India are not very strong. The population of India is also dissatisfied with England... And the population of Turkey, too.

"As for the Turks, I'm sure," Ishikawa lowered his voice for some reason, "that the Germans will force them to allow the transit of troops through their territory towards Iraq, Syria, Palestine and Egypt ... And I think that Russia is unlikely to like it if the Germans penetrate into Turkey. Filimonov diplomatically

kept silent, and the Japanese envoy threw another bait into the waters of his silence:

- I also believe that after this war only America, Germany, the USSR and Japan will remain in the world. And what

is your confidence based on? Filimonov asked. "It will turn out that way because the Germans

will not stop at any obstacles and will pursue the British anywhere in the world..." . - Why? - Well, after all, the ideas of communism prescribe you, sir

Filimonov, spread forward all the time.

Filimonov, who also seemed to be joking, asked:

"And what, Mr. Ishikawa, is that bothering you?"

- Oh no! The Japanese laughed. "But if you don't use this territory, then give it to me. Ishikawa had just presented Filimonov with two books by Heisuke Sutyama - "On Japanese Painting", published in Tokyo in Japanese, and "Iosuke Matsuoka", published in Harbin in Russian, and now our plenipotentiary, jokingly, asked: - How is that? As a return gift? Ishikawa, without answering, laughed even harder and, without a word, parted

hands - they say, if you consider it possible, then I will not refuse.

Filimonov also spread his hands and said: - Alas, I do not dispose of anyone's territories, either in general or India - in particular.

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And the conversation again took on a secular character - a sure sign that it was coming to an end. Soon it really ended, but the events in the Middle East were still very far from completion - in one direction or another. As for Ishikawa, he was right - there was a real prospect of a breakthrough of the Italo-

German troops to Iraq, to the Persian Gulf, and possibly to Iran, where Reza Shah and his government were increasingly oriented towards Berlin.

Chapter 7

The spring of 1941 fully came into its own - the April torrents rushed along the Russian Valdai and the French Vendée; April flowers bloomed fleetingly in the African deserts and adorned the well-kept English flower beds; April spring waters filled the Thames and the Loire, the Danube and the Rhine, the Volga and the Dnieper ...

For the Nile, it was the time of the lowest water, the time of the departure of migratory birds home, to the north ... They flew home, to distant, unimaginably distant for an African Siberia, a little willow warbler ... White and black storks flew to Europe ... They flew to France, to Germany, to the Carpathians and under the Urals shrikes-zhulans ...

The birds flew with their unchanging routes, verified over the millennia, over the deserts, over the Mediterranean and Black Seas, over Belgrade and Berlin, to Budapest and Sofia, to Kiev and to the Central Russian Upland. War thunders rumbled under them, shots crackled... In the same sky where their caravans flew, explosions of anti-aircraft

flew.

They flew to make new nests on the ground and continue the new life.

And PEOPLE had their own concerns - and, alas, not peaceful ones. And their military concerns were carefully prepared **by someone** long before the war - back in the days of peace. In January 1937, the British Ambassador to the United States, Lindsay, spoke with Secretary of State Cordell Hull:

— Sir, my government wants to use every opportunity for US Government information and consultation. - I am listening to you attentively, Mr. Ambassador... - We are talking about the recent meeting of Mr. Eden with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of France, Mr. Delbos. We look at the situation in Europe this way... Germany can no longer be ignored.

Soon she will be strong again. At the same time, we must try to reach a complete agreement with Berlin, tearing Italy away from it. In the latter case, Mussolini can be assigned a loan in the amount of one or two billion lire.

— And

Russia? - Here the basis should be its readiness to act in full agreement with London and Paris. Moscow needs to clearly understand that the USSR should not make individual appearances in the international arena, hindering the fulfillment of the plans of its democratic friends, when it is to its advantage...

Hull nodded in agreement. Still would! It is the Anglo-Saxons who are allowed to act according to their own plans and solely for their own benefit, but not the Russians!

Lindsay explained: -

Then we will agree to consult with the USSR on all important issues of maintaining European peace as an equal partner. Hull nodded again - well, if the

Russians are "at the feet" of the European West, then why not consult with them, especially considering that Europe itself was "at the feet" of America. However, the Secretary of State asked: "And if cooperation with Berlin on these conditions turns out to be impossible?"

"Well, well..." he answered, looking attentively into Hall's eyes. Lindsay - if all methods fail, then ...

- That?

- Then England will consider the proposal for a universal and strictly controlled boycott of all German industry...

Hull looked even more closely into Lindsay's eyes and asked: - Whose

offer? Lindsay chose

not to answer - and so everything was clear. Germany again became a dangerous competitor not only for England, but also for the Yankees ... And Uncle Sam was preparing for an economic, customs war with Germany in an increasingly obvious way. So, he has the cards in his hands ...

However, all the plans of London and Washington gained a real basis only if the USSR behaved as the Yankees should, and not as the USSR should ... Henry Ford allowed his customers to choose a car of any color "provided that they choose black" . So it is here: both Russia and Germany were offered peace and accord with the West and the United States, but on the condition that both powers behave in the way that is required to fulfill the plans of their "democratic friends". In no case should these plans be hindered, although these plans pushed the Russians and Germans back into the third planes of world history.

But there could be obstacles. It could be so... Germany begins to carry out *its* plans, and the West blocks its industrial development. Russia is acting according to *its* plans. And then the boycott of the West would almost automatically lead to a rapid rapprochement between Berlin and Moscow. Hull and his patrons certainly understood this. And they did not lead to peace in Europe, but to war. Therefore, the information of the "little brother" from the Island was taken into account by Hull, and the work of the "moles", undermining peace in Europe and throughout the world, continued - invisible to the world, like any mole work.

However, with regard to the conversation described above, its content did not escape the attention of the 7th department of the Main Directorate of State Security of the NKVD of the USSR. And on January 27, 1937, the head of the department, captain of state security Shpigelglas, signed an intelligence report with a message about a conversation overseas. This report did not land on Stalin's desk right away.

But she went

to bed. The then People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs of the USSR Maxim Litvinov, who bore the name of Meer Wallach in his shtetl youth, also read it. I read and, to the best of my ability, helped to fulfill the plans of my "democratic friends" (but by no means friends of Soviet Russia) in London, Paris, and Washington. But the English press, back in the early thirties, published a statement by Lord Balfour, chairman of the board of steel companies Arthur Balfour and Company Limited, Capital Steel Works Sheffield and director of the National Provincial Bank. A great friend and patron of the international Zionists, Balfour frankly wrote at the time:

"Will the Germans fight again? I firmly believed that one day we would either allow the Germans to arm themselves or arm them ourselves. In the face of the menacing danger from the East, an unarmed Germany would be like a ripe fruit just waiting to be picked by the Russians. If the Germans were unable to defend themselves, we would have to act in their defense. One of the greatest threats to peace is the complete disarmament of Germany ... "

Already from this we could understand that if the Soviet Union is not able to prevent the arming of Germany (whether it would become a fact sooner or later), then the task of the USSR is to exclude the option of turning new German weapons against Russia. It was the West that armed the Germans against the Russians, against the "Soviets". Alas, Litvinov did everything to quarrel Hitler's Reich and Stalin's USSR, and in the spring of 1939 he was removed. And on August 23 of the same year, the Soviet-German pact drew a thick line under the policy of Meer Wallach.

The policy of the Lindseys, Hulls and Balfours has been handed over to the archive of stories was not. It led to the outbreak of war in the autumn of 1939.

NOW, in the spring of 1941, Germany was so armed that it drove Britain out of all its European zones of influence and threatened the very existence of the British Empire, but the process was carefully controlled by the Golden Club of the Elite, and in the long term the Reich was supposed to collapse. However, this was to happen only after he had fulfilled his mission and turned Russia into ruins. And with this, bad luck came out - the Brest meeting of Hitler and Stalin wedged into the plans of the Golden Elite. It frightened everyone - Anglo-

Saxons and Zionists, financiers and aristocrats - everyone who had money on planet Earth that gave power, or power that could be turned into money ... One thing was encouraging: in addition to Brest, there was still a factor

"Barbarossa"... And only he could devalue and destroy the new, unsustainable "Brest" factor.

On March 20, 1941, the Fuhrer held a meeting with the generals. It was one of a number of similar ones related to a possible campaign to the East. At a meeting on February 3, Halder pointed to Moscow as the main goal in the development of the General Staff. The Fuhrer did not agree with him, believing that the priority tasks were Leningrad, close to the Finnish front, and the industrial south of the USSR. The General Staff made adjustments, but doubted ... The meaning of the Eastern Campaign eluded Halder ... England, rather, she could encourage - already by tying the Reich into a war on two fronts. Economically, Germany also risked losing - even preliminary estimates of the costs of Barbarossa exceeded everything so far achieved. No, chaining yourself up in Russia was risky.

However, the Fuhrer himself doubted. On March 20, in his two-hour speech to the generals, he was outwardly confident and resolute, but inwardly ... Internally, he was nervous and bifurcated, on March 17, 1941, Halder reported to him about the readiness of the troops for the upcoming operations. The situation was unclear - the Yugoslavs were preparing to enter the Tripartite Alliance, but anything could happen in Yugoslavia after that ... Control over Greece had to be established as soon as possible, carrying out Operation Marita. And there were also Operation Sonnenblume in Libya, there were "thorns" in Gibraltar, Egypt and Malta, there was the current routine of coastal defense and the fight against the Island ... And there was this damned plan

"Barbarossa". On March 17, 1941, Halder told
Hitler: - Rommel's demands for additional funds

impossible...

"How are the vehicles distributed, Halder?" the Fuhrer then asked. - To the Balkans - 480 tons,
to the West - 2970 tons, to Libya - 2190 tons, the rest - to Barbarossa, my Fuhrer. - And what is the volume of this "rest"? - Army Group "South" - 15,880 tons, Army Group "Center" - 25,020 tons, Army Group "North" - 12,750 tons and the quartermaster general's reserve - 13,590 tons ... - Total?

- Total - 67,240 tons, my Fuhrer. It turned out

that the African operation accounted for a little more than three percent of what the womb of the Barbarossa was supposed to absorb. And that's just transportation! And the weapons? What about tires and petrol? In the Reich, all civilian vehicles up to one and a half tons with a carrying capacity were transferred to iron wheels - without tires. There was a catastrophic lack of rubber ... Even synthetic! There was no need to talk about natural at all.

And after all, the troops themselves, people were also needed ...

The Führer saw the end of March and the beginning of April of 1941 as if in a kaleidoscope: Ribbentrop's reports and conversations with Matsuoka, reports from Moscow, a coup in Belgrade, attacks on Yugoslavia and Greece, meetings at headquarters, Rommel's offensive, the landing of the Yankees in Greenland ... And - thoughts, thoughts, thoughts ... Eight

months ago, when the British rolled

to Dunkirk, he easily agreed to the request of Kleist and von Rundstedt to give a break to Kleist's tank attack group that had pulled ahead. And not only for purely military reasons. They had, of course, their significance, but Hitler still hoped that peace could be reached with the British. He then held back the Luftwaffe ... If he had allowed Goering to crush the expeditionary force from the Island to smithereens, he would have put the proud Britons completely in

a humiliating position. And then "world" with them would hardly be possible. Later, the Fuhrer admitted to Rundstedt that he would like to conclude peace with England on honorable terms for her - even at the cost of abandoning German colonial claims. Rundstedt never wanted to fight with England (he also did not want to fight with

Russia, by the way) and in response to the Fuhrer's words he breathed a sigh of relief. But - as it turns out, prematurely ... "World" did not work out.

Someone in the Wehrmacht believed that "the corporal, like a fool, missed the chance to win," but Hitler understood that a military victory was far from always

brings the desired political solution. He was already convinced of this during the war! All the victories in Europe so far had only one obvious result: Germany and her leader were bogged down in a quagmire of new battles.

Was it possible to get out of it?

Churchill, this "servant of the plutocracy," as he was called in the Reich, did not go to peace. Franco and Petain - one in Madrid, the other in Vichy - did not want to get involved in a fight on the side of Germany. Conversations with Matsuoka also did not inspire... The Asian was evasive, and his position in Tokyo - like the position of his "melancholy prince" - the premier - is not the most stable. In Japan, after all, not everyone is hostile to England, but there are many old enemies of Russia there. And the fact that on the way back the Japanese unexpectedly concluded **his** pact with Stalin did not simplify the

position of the Fuhrer either. What to do? Many in the Reich believe that Russia is strong. Canaris declares that she is weak ... The Admiral reports that his agents provide evidence of Russian friendliness towards the Britons.

The generals differ in military assessments, but they do not understand political ones. Stalin, on the other hand, more or less regularly fulfills his supply obligations and is silent. True, he did not support the Yugoslavs, and the Führer gave him a huge plus - the Brest words nevertheless turned into some concrete steps. But how to be further? Spring

is in full swing, soon - summer ... The preliminary date for the start of "Barbarossa" is May 15th. Although, most likely, everything will have to be shifted to June - Russia is not Poland, the roads there are even worse, and you won't get through the mud in Russia. But is it necessary to go to Russia?

Oh, how little time he has! Almost fifty-two years have already passed - April 20 is another birthday ... A year ago there was no Dunkirk, there was no triumph in the Compiègne forest when he trampled on a memorial plaque that recorded the shame of Germany in the First World War. Then it all came: the Kleist

breakthroughs, the "open city" of Paris, the capitulation of the Gauls, the expulsion of the Britons from the continent, the new field marshals of the Reich, the first air strikes on Britain ... Last fall, he conceived Operation Felix to capture Gibraltar, Operation Isabella to occupy Portugal and the Cape Verde Islands, Madeira and the Azores. And all for a long time

set aside, obscured everything - even before it even started - "Barbarossa". And it is up to him to decide whether to start it. Only to him. Schulenburg from Moscow assures that Stalin sincerely intends to maintain friendly relations with the Reich ...

But - for how long? After all, Germany has only one chance for greatness - it is he, the Fuhrer of the German people, Adolf Hitler. And he is already many years old ... Today he is full of strength. And tomorrow?

Yes, the Reich today is it! Once, Louis XIV, surrounded by court shamblers of Versailles, boasted: "The state is me!" The boast of a crowned idler! But he, the Fuhrer, really became engaged to Germany, and therefore he is her master and leader by the right of a heartfelt choice! The boys of the Hitler Youth look at him with burning eyes, the gray-haired generals (albeit far, far from all!) Recognize his superiority ...

And what about Stalin? Schulenburg writes that when the Italian ambassador in Moscow asked Matsuoka after his meeting with Stalin whether the question of the Soviet Union's relations with the "Axis" was raised there, Matsuoka replied that Stalin had told him that he was a staunch supporter of the "Axis" and an opponent of England and America. That is, the

communist Stalin is a staunch supporter of partnership with the Reich. And he is the

Fuhrer, a staunch opponent of communism. Are you convinced? So

what to do? Full

of doubts, Hitler was finishing the fifty-second year of his life...

And in MOSCOW, Stalin was considering the situation. Matsuoka left with a mutually encouraging result. At night, from the road, he sent a telegram from Yaroslavl to Molotov, which said:

"By signing the pact today, we are setting our nations on a new path of friendship. I believe that this document will serve as a beacon for us to improve our relations."

But Matsuoka himself - drunk at the Kremlin banquet about this new "lighthouse" - blurted out, looking at his military: "Oh, these warriors! Even now they are all thinking how they could defeat Russia!"

Stalin then noticed that the USSR was not the old Russia, which could be beaten, and, hushing up the awkwardness of the situation, added: "But you and we are Asians ..." Matsuoka immediately picked up: "So let's

drink to the Asians!" Remembering sometimes the comical pathos of the Japanese, Stalin involuntarily smiled and thought: "Yes, we are Asians. But we are also Europeans... And we drank Russian Starka with Ribbentrop for Europeans, and Narzan and

Belarusian spring water with the Führer." And what follows from all this? The Germans are building up and building up their eastern grouping. There are border incidents... From the border they report: a German in uniform, with a "Walter", went a hundred meters deep into our territory, was hailed by patrol, fled, fired back on the move, was killed, fell already on German territory, two meters from the border line. The Germans recognized our innocence, but that doesn't make it any easier. Such small facts sometimes hurt worse than something imp... we are all people, all are people...

So what follows from this?

Perhaps the fact that Vyacheslav should be sent to Berlin again - in the same "blitz" as Hitler sent Ribbentrop to us in 1939. And you need to send it by plane, and emphasize that the matter is important and urgent, and let him directly draw a parallel there with the end of that August - they say, Comrade Stalin proposes to take new important decisions in the same style, quickly and unexpectedly for the outside world.

Yes, Molotov needs to fly, not ride the train. True, there is a decision of the Central Committee to ban flights to members of the Politburo, but the very violation of it, the very unprecedented fact of such a flight will show everyone, and Hitler above all, that Stalin is ready to offer the Fuhrer something very important. And Vyacheslav needs to be in Berlin by April 20 - Hitler's birthday ... The reason is quite decent, but the task is archi ..., as Ilyich used to say, difficult: you need to get the Fuhrer to Moscow.

The Fuhrer, of course, is not an easy guy, he has a lot of ambition, he can buck up - they say, I have already visited you once, now, they say, let Mr. Stalin pay us a return visit. However, new

the conversation with the Fuhrer should be held in Moscow. An alarming year is coming, if you miss the situation, it can become, God forbid, a military man. And Hitler must be finally convinced that Russia is not an enemy to his Reich. Not now, not many years from now.

We are Asians and Europeans. Germans are Europeans... And in Asia huge masses of Asians can become allies of both Russians and Germans. Yes, it's time... It's time! But first, you need to think again.

In the middle of April, Stalin summoned Timoshenko and Voroshilov, People's Commissar for Defense. He told them in advance that the conversation would be about tanks, but he did not say what and why.

When both marshals entered his office, Stalin immediately after greetings asked: - Comrade Timoshenko, what

is our situation with tanks? The People's Commissar of Defense looked at him inquiringly - they say, in what sense "what position"? And Stalin explained:

— It is very likely that we will have to share the old equipment with the Germans and Italians, and maybe with someone else ... The marshals looked at each other, and Stalin added: - We must invite Hitler to Moscow, and for success - make a good present...

Semyon Konstantinovich Timoshenko smelled gunpowder for the first time at the age of twenty - in 1915, on the "imperialist" ... In 1917, this first war of his immediately, without interruption, turned into a Civil war for him ... Then he joined the "Red Generals", fought together with Stalin, then with Budyonny ... And for seven months now, since May 40, Timoshenko wore that marshal's baton, the first molecules of which appeared in his soldier's satchel when he began serving as an ordinary machine gunner in the royal cavalry. The military talent of the marshal was modest, but strong, like a peasant solid. He was weak in the intricacies of politics, he didn't particularly approve of

all these "tricks" with the Germans, but he did not hesitate to admit that "Stalin knows better" ... Therefore, to new trends in business

external in general and for the visit of Hitler in particular, he was ready as a soldier. And a good soldier calmly accepts any turn of events, unless, of course, he is confident in his commander as in himself. And Timoshenko was confident in Stalin. So, not allowing himself any hesitation or internal doubts, the marshal smoothed his shiny, clean-shaven head and reported: "As of January 1, we have only twenty-

three thousand, two hundred and eighty-nine armored vehicles. - And what types are the most? Stalin asked. -

Seven thousand two hundred and twelve T-26 old samples and almost two thousand new modifications, four thousand four hundred twenty-five - BT-7, two thousand two hundred and twenty-five - T-37, a little more than two thousand T-27 and about two thousand BT -5. Stalin listened to this list with legitimate pride - behind it were the

efforts of the whole country, and the party, and himself. And Timoshenko sighed: - There are not enough new ones ... - Well, we can share the old ones with

"comrades" Hitler and

Mussolini?

Timoshenko, frowning a little, hesitated with an answer, and Klim Voroshilov, looking cheerfully at his old comrade-cavalryman, confidently answered for him:

"We can give away a thousand old ones without tension ... If, of course, they agree to carry out a major overhaul themselves, because the materiel is already seriously worn out ...

Hitler, of course, did not know about this conversation, but he felt the approach of certain events, and when Ribbentrop came to him with a beaming and preoccupied face at the same time, the Fuhrer realized that there was interesting news, and this news was from Moscow.

- MY FUEHRER! Ribbentrop exclaimed. Stalin sent

a personal message to you...

And then, although he held this message in his hands, he could not stand it and immediately, without giving it away, said:

- He wants Molotov to fly to us in the near future! - Flew out? - Exactly! - And when?
As soon as we
agree! But the letter
itself...

just handed over by Dekanozov. Hitler

took it and, without reading it, looked at the excited Ribbentrop... Then he began to read the text. Stalin really did take some new step, since he announced without bluntness that Molotov would bring very important proposals, and asked not to delay with

answer.

"If you agree," **he wrote at the end**, "then Mr. Molotov can fly to Berlin in the same urgent manner as was the case with the first arrival of Mr. Ribbentrop to Moscow."

So, the hint was transparent: time does not wait, but if the Germans and Russians do not lose it, then it will work for them. What do you say, Ribbentrop? - I think the Russians will offer us the development of the ideas of Brest ... They obviously getting more realistic...

"You mean their position on the Balkans and Yugoslavia, Ribbentrop?" - Yes ... - So, the Eastern campaign

is canceled? the Fuhrer asked with a challenge. "My Fuhrer, I don't know what Molotov is flying

towards us with, but I can formulate my views on a possible conflict in one sentence: if every burnt Russian city were as important to us as a sunken English cruiser or battleship, then I stood would be entirely for the war already this summer ... But even if we win it militarily, we risk losing in

political and economic sense...

Hitler listened without interrupting - his Reichsminister expressed his own hesitation. And Ribbentrop, encouraged by the chief's silence, went on and on:

“By attacking Russia, we will give the British a new moral stimulus... Russia is not a potential ally of the British, but a war with it for Germany is a war on two fronts... And economically, even if we profit from the huge mass of Russian lands, we do not win... Traditional the passive resistance of the Slavs is a quagmire... But they will resist actively, even if we drive them beyond the Urals! - And you offer ... - I offer, my Fuhrer, to wait for the arrival of Molotov ... - Invite ... I am ready to receive him even tomorrow.

* * *

MOLOTOV arrived two days later. At the airport, he was - for Molotov - very smiling, and on the same day, in the evening, the Fuhrer received him and Plenipotentiary Dekanozov at the Berghof. The atmosphere of a private residence was conducive to intimacy, and Hitler understood that they would talk about delicate matters.

However, the very beginning of the conversation stunned him. Molotov, gleaming his pince-nez and smiling so cordially, as if he were not a guest, but a host, said the following: “Mr. Hitler! In this

case, I'm not so much a prime minister as a courier... - I don't quite understand you,

Mr. Molotov, - the Fuhrer said slightly disappointed, expecting to hear something important and concrete. However, Molotov, not embarrassed by the tone of the

Fuhrer, still cheerfully announced: - My main task is to personally convey to you the

huge request of Comrade Stalin to visit Moscow in the near future ... We invite you in the expectation that at your new personal meeting you and Comrade Stalin you will be able to find a solution to many problems that arose or developed after the Brest meeting ... Hitler leaned back in his chair, looked at Molotov, then turned his gaze to Ribbentrop, to his roguish personal translator

Schmidt. The offer was tempting, although it would have been the second visit of the head of the Reich to Russian soil, while Stalin had never been to the Reich yet ... But it was hardly appropriate to play ceremonies and good manners now ... Stalin is right - we must try explain face to face - and urgently. Of course, not everyone will like it. Someone would like to tie his hands, the leader of the Reich. And sometimes it connects. But while he still manages to do business as he sees fit himself. The Fuhrer thought, everyone was silent. And everyone was silent for various reasons. The

Fuhrer - because he thought and weighed. Molotov - because he was waiting for his answer. Ribbentrop was afraid to intervene at the wrong time and thereby frighten off the consent of the Fuhrer, which the Reich Minister could well hope for.

Schmidt, on the other hand, was silent simply because for the time being he was translating there was nothing.

And the Fuhrer kept thinking... - All right, - he said at last, - I'll come. When the lord Stalin would like to see me?

- As soon as business allows you, but I would like it right after your birthday ... It's nice to celebrate such things with your family, but after ... I don't congratulate you yet, Herr Reich Chancellor, because, as they say, you can't congratulate you in advance ... But in Moscow, we are preparing gifts for you that we hope you will like ...

- Well, Mr. Molotov, I don't thank you yet - for the same reason ... But for the invitation - thank you! I accept it. I think I could be in Moscow, let's say... the twenty-third of April. - We will be glad to meet you, Herr Reich Chancellor ... - Good! What else did you have to give me? - Except for the invitation of Comrade Stalin - nothing else in particular essential. - How?

And you personally flew here just because of this? - did not hide his surprise flattered by the Fuhrer. "Well,

Herr Reich Chancellor, a guest and a courier," Molotov smiled. And they both laughed.

The Führer left for Moscow by private train via Warsaw, Brest and Minsk to Smolensk and further to Mozhaisk, Vyazma and - Moscow.

This was the path of Napoleon, and now, driving through forests and floodplains, crossing these rivers, streams and swampy plains, Hitler for the first time truly understood how great Russia is and how difficult the road into its depths is. He stood at the window for a long time and thought - on the road he never thought like that, because he had never been on the road for so long.

Stalin and unknown prospects awaited him in Moscow, for After all, Stalin did not know what his Brest interlocutor was going to see him with. And did the Fuhrer

himself know this? Yes, neither Hitler nor Stalin knew this yet, but the main topic was already set by history itself. The topic was lost in the past, but inevitably moved into the future. And what it will be, to a large extent, depended on the new Kremlin visit. After many years, the

masters of entertainment will come up with a trick - karaoke, when the singers do not have to think about what they should sing to the backing track of the melody of the song, the text of which is familiar to everyone ... And now the two leaders had to "sing" something like karaoke, because the melody and words of their the history of the two peoples has been writing a common "song" for more than one century. Hitler recalled Brest and thought that the upcoming meetings with Stalin could become a final turning point. Something was already outlined for the first time ... After that, considerable changes took place, but you can turn sideways or even turn back now at any moment. Turn, and then turn around again to face Russia and ... strike! Developments on "Barbarossa" practically finished.

Hitler, passing through Russia, thought about this, although the topic of the day was woven into his thoughts - in Greece, things were coming to an end, but in the Middle East, in Iraq, events were only developing ... In Africa, Rommel took a break, without taking Tobruk ... In Churchill was planning something in London, Roosevelt and his Jewish advisers in Washington...

Looking out the window at the Russian expanses, the Fuhrer also thought about how important it is to have a territory that allows the people to develop freely. Germany did not have this. In Europe, only Belgium and Holland had a population density twice that of Germany, and England - about the same ... But England had colonies all over the world, like the Belgians and the Dutch. Danes

lived twice as spacious as the Germans, the French - three times, the Chinese - also three times, the Yankees - ten times, and the Russians - and generally twenty times. Outside of Europe, only the Japanese lived more crowded than the Germans, but their level of consumption was incommensurable with the

German. The Fuhrer has repeatedly said that Germany has three most obvious ways out: 1) an ever-increasing density of the population and the intensification of the economy; 2) the acquisition of new overseas colonies; 3) the acquisition of new lands in Europe in the territories adjacent to the German one. The first path was exhausted, on the second, Germany was defeated in the First World War and so far has not gained anything stable in the ongoing war, and the third just led to this new war. But with whom is he in alliance and against whom is he leading her?

He was driving and thinking: "I would need twenty years to mature that new elite that absorbed the philosophy of National Socialism from early childhood ... But the tragedy of the Germans is that we always lack not only space, but also time ... We always we are in a hurry ... But the Russians may not be in a hurry ... But they are also in a hurry ... And time works for them ... But for us? .. "He was thinking, and Russian forests flew by outside the window,
and
at the junctions they counted time, like a clock: "Tick-tock, tick-tock..."

TOGETHER with the Fuhrer, Schulenburg returned to Russia, and the Fuhrer called him into the salon.

- Schulenburg, how do the Russians feel about their treaty with the Japanese?
"Very

pleased, my Fuhrer!" The very scene at the station, which Stalin obviously deliberately played out, speaks for itself... After all, he publicly demonstrated his loyalty to the Axis countries there...

- But the Balkan peoples got the impression that Russia was behind the coup in Yugoslavia ... Schulenburg made a vague
gesture - they say, I'm from Moscow
it is difficult to judge, and the Fuhrer clarified:

- Personally, I am sure that England was the behind-the-scenes inspirer of the coup ... However, what worries me is that the Russians began to concentrate and deploy troops, unnecessarily concentrating many divisions in the Baltics ... - My Fuhrer, this is about the familiar

Russian desire for three hundred percent security ... If we send one division anywhere, the Russians will move ten divisions there, to be quite sure of their safety ... I can't believe that Russia will ever attack Germany ...

"Perhaps... But the Britons know how to corrupt nations. They hoped for a broad Yugoslav-Greek-Turkish-Russian front and wanted to create a new alliance against us, remembering the Thessaloniki front in the last war ...

Schulenburg

remembered all this - in 1911 he was consul in Russian Tiflis, in 1917 - Damascus, and the count knew the eastern situation not from books.

Therefore, he nodded in agreement, and the Fuhrer continued to express his bitterness to him: - I am very

sorry that the efforts of England forced me to oppose this miserable Greece ... It is disgusting to suppress this brave people contrary to feelings. And these Yugoslavs... When I was informed about the coup on March 27, I thought it was a joke. And this experience makes me cautious... Schulenburg nodded again. "The peoples," Hitler said

thoughtfully further, "today
allow their policy to be determined not so much by reason and logic, as
by
hatred...

He fell silent, then added: -

And also, perhaps, monetary interests ... Although not always their own ... After all, as a result of English promises and lies, first the Poles, to whom I set favorable conditions for them, turned out to be plunged into disaster, then - France, not who wanted to fight, followed by Norway, Holland and Belgium ... And now - Greece and Yugoslavia ... But we can say that the peoples have nothing to do with it - I have to deal not with peoples, but with governments ... And the same Greek government was not neutral. And the Greek press behaved shamelessly...

Hitler could have said more definitely - "corrupt", as the bourgeois press always behaved ... And the more "democratic" the organ was, the easier it was to buy it. The Fuhrer was three times right in his assessment of England - she gave provocative "guarantees" to both Poland and Greece ... But Russia could not be bought, and the Fuhrer understood this - which he said to Schulenburg. However, he also spoke about those instincts of hatred for the Germans that the Russians still had. "And so I have to be careful," he finished. "But Cripps is now struggling to get meetings only with Vyshinsky, my Fuhrer! And Stalin told

Matsuoka that he swore allegiance to the "axis" ... And I am convinced that

Stalin is ready to make far-reaching concessions to us ... He has already hinted to our trade representatives in Moscow that in the forty-second year they will be able to make requests for the supply of five million tons of grain!

"That's good, Schulenburg," objected Hitler, "but where are they take so many wagons?

— Transport difficulties can be eliminated by better use of Russian ports ...

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The conversation, having gone down to specific details, faded away ... And the wheels at the junctions counted: "Tick-tock, tick-tock..."

Chapter 8

The letter train arrived in Moscow on April 23. Kalinin, Molotov and Voroshilov met the Fuhrer and Ribbentrop at the Belorussky railway station. Stalin was absent, which was understandable from the point of view of etiquette - the handsome Kalinin was the official head of state, and Molotov was the head of government.

The absence of Stalin meant that the highest degree of the meeting was yet to come, but the meeting was organized according to the highest level: carpet paths and the sea - literally a sea of flowers, flags, children, hundreds of fanfare greetings, orchestras shining with silver and gold, worked out to the automaticity of the movement of the guard of honor - all this was to compensate for the temporary absence of the Master himself.

Having finished with etiquette, we drove at high speed through the Russian capital to the discreet greetings of the endless trellises of the masses, in whirlwinds of welcome leaflets dropped from the plane. Moscow was already preparing for the May Day holiday and, decorated with bright posters in addition to spring greenery, looked especially elegant.

The street along which the motorcade rode, built up with buildings of different styles, but not discordant with each other, was named after the Russian writer Gorky. Molotov informed the Fuhrer about this. He also said that before the revolution, the street - then it was called Tverskaya - was much narrower and only in the thirties it was moved apart - the houses they were passing by were moved on special platforms.

"This experience can be useful to us too," the Fuhrer perked up, who had long dreamed of a new, grandiose Berlin. A

few minutes later, the cars passed the Historical Museum, which stood on the right, a red brick building with intricate turrets, and drove to Red Square, where the speed slowed down.

Gray paving stones of a huge area, slender fir trees under the high Kremlin wall and a red flag over the green dome of a huge palace, a strict Mausoleum, strict majestic Kremlin towers and

the cheerful discord of the many-headed Basil the Blessed captured the Fuhrer at once - after all, he knew a lot about architecture. On the

towers of the Kremlin in the bright sun, five-pointed stars of ruby glass shone with scarlet light. The Fuhrer involuntarily admired, and Molotov, not without pride, remarked: "The size of the one above the Spasskaya Tower is about four meters, the rest are a little smaller ... Weight - up to one and a half tons ... And everyone revolves even from a light breeze ..." Motorcade through the front entrance gate
The Spasskaya

Tower drove inside the Kremlin, and soon the cars stopped in front of a large building. Approaching the Fuhrer and Kalinin with Molotov, among other officers, the smart general introduced himself as the commandant of the Kremlin and opened the heavy door for the guests. From the lobby, the elevator lifted the guests to one floor, and then a few meters of a long narrow corridor led the Fuhrer and Ribbentrop to the reception room, where the desk of Stalin's personal secretary Poskrebyshev, who immediately stood at attention, was lined with a good dozen telephone sets. Molotov, inviting, held out his hand and went to the door, letting

the Fuhrer and Ribbentrop entered it, and after them he went inside himself.

Stalin stood at the long table.

At the FIRST moment, his office struck the Fuhrer with its modesty and simplicity. He considered himself - and not without reason - an interior specialist, his Berghof was planned by him personally, and this creation of his was admired by many quite sincerely. And his new Reich Chancellery? It was designed to overwhelm foreign guests and overwhelmed them with size, luxury, brilliance. But here a different style prevailed. The walls were clad

in light oak panelling, and a thick carpeted path led up to the desk across the entire office. A large portrait of Lenin hung over the table, and Lenin's death mask in the right corner. Behind the table is a comfortable leather armchair, next to it is a table with a battery of multi-colored telephones. Next to it is a bookcase and a spacious

leather sofa. Maps, diagrams, and graphs hung on the walls... To the left of the front

door was a long meeting table covered with cloth, around which stood heavy chairs—comfortable, but without a hint of luxury or pomp.

Anyone who wanted to officially meet

the Führer in his official residence had to take small steps to overcome the “hundred meters” of perfectly smooth marble tiles, now and then risking slipping - there’s no time for a solemn, full of dignity step ...

The Führer loved expensive effects, and this always justified. Here the effect was provided by simplicity and efficiency. And yet - the personality of the owner himself.

Stalin wore a white tunic with a standing collar and white trousers tucked into soft boots. He smiled openly and held out his hand for a handshake. The Führer approached, shook it impetuously, and Stalin said: “I am glad to

welcome you to the Kremlin and am extremely grateful for your consent to come ... We have a lot to talk about and, I hope, a lot to decide ... The

Führer, all his eyes fixed on Stalin’s face, did not immediately notice that on the side is that Russian general Ignatiev, who translated their trusted conversations in Brest - a former count and a former tsarist military diplomat. Now, having heard a familiar voice, the Fuhrer turned to the interpreter and, recognizing the general, realized that the conversations would again be delicate, trusted and important ... He greeted Ignatiev, who had already begun to translate, with a nod of his head, and, unexpectedly for himself, said in response, at first glance, out of place:

- You have a huge territory, Herr Stalin! I had to get to Moscow to understand this seriously ...

Stalin nodded understandingly and

answered: “Yes, Europe lives closer... But we, Marxists, have long been offering the world a way out — to destroy capitalism on the planet... Then there will be enough land and sun for everyone...”

“I said something similar to Mr. Molotov back in November of last year,” the Fuhrer did not enter into a discussion. Stalin

invited the guests to sit down and suggested:

- Mr. Hitler, as I have already said and as you could understand for yourself, the Soviet government has a number of important initiatives, which we will discuss in detail. But I would like to make it clear to you right away that we, for our part, will be extremely frank ... And if we agree now, then this will become a prologue to a truly new world ...
Hitler

listened, trying to understand what Stalin meant and what he wanted by doing such a statement in a seemingly solemn tone unusual for him. And Stalin suddenly raised his palm above the table, inviting attention, and began to clearly quote something from memory:

– Germany could pursue the policy of conquering new lands in Europe only in alliance with England against Russia... But vice versa: Germany could pursue the policy of conquering colonies and strengthening its world trade only with Russia against England... Since Germany has embarked on a policy of intensified industrialization and intensified development trade, then, in essence, there was no longer the slightest reason to fight with Russia, and only the worst enemies of both nations ... - here Stalin paused.

Hitler felt hot - Stalin quoted "Mein Kampf" ... But there the Fuhrer - having not yet been Reich Chancellor - wrote a lot of things! Including about Russia. And what else will this Russian Georgian quote from there? Hitler glanced askance at Ribbentrop - he sat with bated breath and stretched out as if on a parade ground.

And Stalin, looking friendly at the guests, finished: - Only the worst enemies of both nations were interested in for such hostility to arise. He

paused, but immediately asked the question: "Do you remember these ideas, Herr Hitler?" - I think, Herr Stalin, your question is redundant. But why is he? "I want to prove to you, Mr. Hitler, that we have no ulterior motives towards the Germans... What I just quoted is the past. Moreover, you have now occupied Europe from the English Channel to Olympus in an alliance not with England, but by fighting against her and having a

treaty of friendship with Russia. - Agree. - But now we need more, and we in Russia are ready to go for more ... That is why I would like there to be no

omissions. And so I ask you to allow me to quote you again in order to give back to the past and this quote ... Give it so that it no longer darkens our common future ... Will you allow it?

Hitler, anticipating a few not-so-pleasant minutes, tensed up inwardly, nodded his head. And Stalin began again: - The

modern rulers of Russia do not at all think about concluding an honest alliance with Germany, and even more so about fulfilling it if they concluded it ... The Jews, holding Russia in their hands, see Germany not as an ally, but as a country destined suffer the same lot as Russia... Who enters into an alliance with such a partner, whose only interest is to destroy the other partner? As Stalin spoke, and Ignatiev translated, an alarming silence was established in the office ...

Nobody expected to hear **this** : neither the Russians, nor even the Germans ... Everyone tensed up, Hitler twitched nervously, barely restraining himself, and Stalin was one of all, except Ignatieva, who remained absolutely calm, slowly broke this silence and said:

Mr Hitler! I propose to archive this quote! Forever! And he made a decisive

gesture with his palm, as if sweeping away from the table like garbage that got there. Hitler, glaring at

Stalin's immovable face, which became in an instant chased, was silent. Stalin was also silent. Then the

Fuhrer slowly leaned back in his chair and dropped into silence:

“Herr Stalin!” You are truly a great person! Stalin

stood up, and almost simultaneously with him, the Fuhrer stood up, and the rest jumped up after them. Stalin silently held out his hand to the Reich Chancellor, who just as silently shook it, and Stalin in an everyday tone - as if nothing had happened

- said: - I understand how little time you have, but I would very much like to postpone all business for the evening, but for now — just to introduce you at least a little to the Kremlin. It's worth it - because you love and know architecture. In addition, this way you can better understand Russia .

HITLER felt that now it was really best to get distracted - the master of Russia had wrapped up everything very cool from the very beginning ... And soon they were already walking along the inner squares of the Kremlin, and the academician with the unpronounceable surname Shchusev gave explanations in excellent German. Ignatiev, temporarily free from translation, managed to tell the Fuhrer that Shchusev was the author of not only the project of the Mausoleum on Red Square, but also of a number of churches, and received the title of academician of the old Academy of Arts back in 1910.

Shchusev turned out to be not only a connoisseur of old Russian architecture, but also a subtly felt it - as well as world architecture in general. And, listening to him, Hitler enjoyed a competent amateur, able to understand a high professional.

Already almost seventy years old, Shchusev led them from the Palace of Facets to the Assumption Cathedral, from the Patriarch's Chambers to the Arsenal and back - to Ivan the Great, to the Tsar Cannon and the Tsar Bell ... They walked past palaces and cathedrals, exchanging only short phrases with each other, and mostly listening to Shchusev, and Hitler began to have that feeling of turning around that he had in Brest, but after that it almost disappeared. And now it has returned again, so as not to disappear, it seems... In one of the

cathedrals, Stalin suddenly said: - Do you know, Mr. Hitler, in my youth I was a chorister in the church... - Oh! - Yes ... And not only me ... Here, Molotov was also. And, Vyacheslav, was it the case? - It was ...

At home in Nalinsk. "Yes, and I, after all, was flooded in Lugansk on the kliros," Voroshilov admitted with a laugh. The Fuhrer looked at the red leaders with surprise - they turned out to be even more interesting people than in Brest.

When Stalin and the Fuhrer entered the St. George Hall of the Grand Kremlin Palace, the guest could not contain his delight. By new Berlin standards, the hall was not so big - 61 meters long, 20 meters wide, and about 18 meters high. But this hall of Russian glory,

named, according to Shchusev, in honor of the Order of St. George the Victorious, was the personification of calm grandeur.

Snow-white, illuminated by six bronze gilded chandeliers (weighing, as the same Shchusev said, 1300 kilograms each) and wall sconces, he subtly, but very accurately approached the style of Stalin.

* * *

And STALIN surprised and surprised. The fact that he seems to have decided to devote all his time - for the entire visit of the Reich Chancellor - to devote to the guest, could not be very surprising. After all, it was, without exaggeration, a historic, epoch-making visit. But Stalin proposed a very contrasting program ... They were leaving the ancient Archangel Cathedral with the tombs of the Grand Dukes Yaroslav Vladimirovich and Dimitri Donskoy, Ivan I Kalita and Ivan III Vasilyevich, tsars Ivan the Terrible, Alexei Mikhailovich, Vasily Shuisky and others, when Stalin said:

- Mr. Reich Chancellor, People's Commissar of the Aviation Industry Alexei Ivanovich Shakhurin would like to show us one of the Moscow aircraft factories ... Shall we go?

This was said in a tone downright familiar, and the Fuhrer also readily agreed - cathedrals are cathedrals, but it is also interesting to see how the Russians assemble aircraft. The young

people's commissar - just, as it turned out, thirty-seven years old, in an impeccable gray suit - made a good impression, but what the Fuhrer saw at the factory was incredibly impressive! He didn't expect anything like this! A huge assembly shop, a conveyor, the scope of the factory "backlog", an airfield lined with aircraft that were undergoing factory tests and were waiting to be sent to the troops - it was a "gross-colossus-sal"! At the same plant, the Fuhrer was also shown a supernova: the Soviet Omega

helicopter ... The twin-screw device already looked like something brought up, took off and landed vertically, made a full turn in the air, but Stalin honestly admitted that this was only the initial stage of development.

"But this car has a future," he remarked, however. - We have more reliable helicopters, but they are already, consider, obsolete ... The Fuhrer, together with

Halder, was once shown a German helicopter, but Russian achievements were absolute news to him. And Shakhurin, pleased with the reaction of the guest, having grown bolder, suggested that he also visit the engine plant. And there the Fuhrer was simply amazed at the view of the conveyor assembly of aircraft engines. In Germany - he knew this for sure - this had never happened before. He was also surprised by the engine itself - the aircraft gun fired through the hollow shaft of the gearbox ... And the operation of landing the cylinder block on the crankcase completely finished him off. At the touch of a button, a multitude of pins of various heights, long and short, entered precisely into the corresponding holes. And the block immediately sat in its place.

Time flew by unnoticed for business, and just as imperceptibly it flew by at a dinner in honor of the Reich Chancellor, which was given on behalf of Kalinin. But the Fuhrer knew that his first Russian day was not yet over, because Stalin said in an undertone before dinner,

leaning towards the guest

- I suggest you spend the night at my dacha, in a calm and secluded setting...

And in the late afternoon, a small cortege drove up to Stalin's Kuntsevo dacha.

IN THE DEPTH of the park stood a one-story house, surrounded on all sides by thick fruit trees - now in spring bloom - trees. There were, however, ate with pines, and nimble tame squirrels, of which there were many, were hiding in their branches. In the dining room,

furnished modestly and simply, but comfortably, a large beautiful fireplace burned ... Stalin approached him with the gait of the owner of the house, threw firewood, and soon the flame additionally illuminated the whole room, lit softly and subdued ...

- I love living fire and living warmth, - also at home
Stalin confessed, inviting him to the table with a gesture.

“Oh, me too...” the Fuhrer agreed. On the table,
where there were exclusively vegetarian snacks with a predominance of greens,
sturgeon and caviar, there were champagne and Narzan for the Fuhrer, Georgian wine for
Stalin, and other drinks for the rest. Stalin, Hitler, translators Ignatiev, Pavlov and Schmidt sat
down at the table, and besides them - Ribbentrop, Molotov, Zhdanov and Schulenburg. And
when everyone settled down and drank to understanding and friendliness, Stalin, looking
straight at Hitler,

said:

- Mr. Hitler, first of all, I would like to inform you that the Soviet Union is ready to join the
Pact of Three if we resolve some issues ... Not for the first time that day, it became quiet. The
fire crackled in the fireplace.

Hitler also looked into Stalin's eyes and said: - You mean those proposals that have
already been passed to
me

through Mr. Molotov? Balkans, bases on the Bosphorus and so on?

- No ... All this is not the main thing now ... And in general, in the future it may become
insignificant ... But the main thing, - Stalin, anticipating the Fuhrer's question, raised his hand,
- either to achieve peace in Europe on the basis of common efforts, or ... - Or? .. - Or press
England outside of England
so that she

herself
asked for peace, or ... - Or?
— Or force

her to do it by force the next year on her own
territory.

Hitler, who had tensed before, could not hold back a satisfied sigh. But the fact that
Stalin began this most important conversation at the table, when no notes were kept, showed
that what was said was not yet a fact of bilateral relations, but only a clearly expressed
intention ...

Stalin continued: “However,
now I would ask for your consent to our reservation that our entry into the triple alliance
as a fourth member does not impose military obligations on us in relation to those countries
with which the “axis” is already at war ...

- That is, - the Fuhrer asked, - you do not want to fight with Britain?

- Let's just say, Mr. Hitler, - **for now** we do not want to fight with anyone ... But this does not mean that we will not remove this reservation in the not too distant future ... - Well, let's say, - the not very pleased guest muttered. - In addition, I propose to start a practical solution of issues related to Finland, Turkey and the Balkans.

- Still - the Balkans? - Hitler could not stand it, somewhat nervously asked Hitler, and Stalin calmly explained: - Our new approach to the Balkan question will most likely be to your liking ... We, on sound reflection, do not pretend to advance to the Balkans. Even in the long term... As you can see, we did not support the anti-German forces in Yugoslavia. And I hope you appreciate it. But more needs to be done! Now Yugoslavia is agitated... Actually, Yugoslavia no longer exists, but it is important to make sure that Serbia does not become an enemy of Germany and does not lose its traditional sympathies for Russia... It is difficult, but possible. Hitler shrugged his shoulders: "Yes, it's possible... I think it can be done like this... In the near future, Serbia should be added to the Pact of Three..." Here Stalin interrupted himself and clarified: "However, it will probably soon have to be called the Pact of Four..."

- Cvetkovic has already joined him, but nothing worthwhile from this, as you know, did not work out," the Fuhrer observed gloomily.

"True," Stalin agreed, "but now we are talking about Serbia and its annexation not on the conditions that were put forward earlier for Yugoslavia, but on more stringent ones ...

Stalin paused his discussions, as if he were thinking about something again, and then said: -

Suppose it could be done like this ... Contingents of German and Italian troops remain in the lands of Yugoslavia, but at the same time you could abandon the tough occupation policy and have for the occupying forces, the status is approximately the same as in Bulgaria... - The Serbs will definitely start an insurrectionary

struggle, - Hitler disagreed, - and they will have to be suppressed.

- Not necessary! Let's say you prevent inter-ethnic massacres that may occur there... And you don't stop them yourself, but with our political arbitration... We don't want to go to the Balkans - your activity there will block the possible activity of England on the Black Sea anyway. Now she is not up to the straits - she has enough worries in the Mediterranean Sea, and that is enough for us. Stalin fell silent again, nodded his head: - Yes, enough ... But we, Mr. Hitler, are ready to help you gain a

foothold in Serbia, using our influence. If we act together, it will sober up the Croats too... Especially since they can become a problem in your relations with the Italians. Southern nationalism, Herr Hitler, is not European nationalism... Believe me, I am Caucasian myself and I know what I am talking about. Hitler listened, and Stalin continued: - And there is a subtle point, Herr Hitler ... We do not support Tito now, but we can

negotiate with him with the participation of representatives of Germany. The main point: Germany and Russia do not want the war to return to the continent, and therefore Germany will not allow British troops to enter the south of Europe, and the USSR treats this position with understanding. With this in mind, we will recommend that Tito refrain from active action against you, and Germany will put pressure on official Belgrade in order to carry out a realistic agrarian reform in Serbia with the participation of Tito. I think this will provide you with a Balkan rear, and for us - confidence that peace will be preserved on the continent and that the Serbs will not consider that Russia has completely abandoned them ...

Stalin paused and added: "Yes, and you will immediately receive a credit of confidence from the Serbs if you take the side of the Serbian peasants." You don't rely on Croats alone in Yugoslavia ...

— And Türkiye? the Fuhrer burst out. -

Turkey is more loyal to you than to the British ... If she does not respect us, then she is afraid. Of course, the British pay more, but if we together make it clear to the Turks that we have no disagreements, and even if the USSR makes the Triple Alliance Quadruple, then the Turks are unlikely to listen first of all to the British. And then we'll see...

Hitler recalled how in 1939 he and Ribbentrop offered the Russians the principle of a shop with goods, where there is everything to choose from - from friendship to enmity. Today, a similar shop was opened, it seems, for him by Stalin. And the choice of goods was also great, and the goods offered were of high quality. Hitler was silent, waiting for Stalin's explanation on the last point he had raised himself, and waited...

- As for Finland, we propose what was already discussed in Brest, that is, German military personnel follow to the north of Norway in transit through the USSR, just like. they are already on their way through Sweden, and we guarantee you deliveries of raw materials from Finland through our territory... But we will coordinate the volumes of deliveries of nickel ore to you together.

Stalin grimaced: - The

issues of transit,

however, will be the subject of premature friction with England, but so be it ... If the Japanese show more activity against the British in Asia, then London will not be up to a new conflict with us. - Premature? Hitler clarified an important point. - Premature,

but, as I understand it, in principle, you do not reject? "Yes... But we'll talk about that later..."

THE NEXT day began again with Academician Shchusev. On the eve, saying goodbye, Stalin said:

— Herr Hitler... I am sure that this time we will agree on all serious practical points... And we still have serious conversations to come... But I would like - if this coincides with your desires - that you get to know Russia as best as possible during these three days. . And - the old, and - the new ... The old, it seems to me, for you, with your love for architecture, is best to recognize through what was done by old Russian architects. New Russia is our new streets and factories, institutions and, of course, people... It's a pity you can't show everything, although we would like to show you the entire Union, and I hope we will show it to you someday. In the meantime, look at least a part of the Union - its hundred face.

Hitler was touched - more often than other leaders, he met with the Duce and became close to him, but Stalin bribed with humanity and respect. Stalin did not try to put pressure on him, but the Fuhrer felt his superiority, although, to his great surprise, it did not weigh him down. And the Fuhrer, together with Stalin, went to Shchusev. They started, however, with the subway. Traffic was closed in the morning, all night the routes were checked by the NKVD and Heydrich's service, but the Fuhrer received great pleasure - the metro was good, especially the Mayakovskaya station ... At Shchusev, they were shown the General Plan for the

Reconstruction of Moscow, and the Fuhrer was upset that next to he did not have Speer. Stalin, however, immediately suggested: - So what was the matter? Let him come - we'll show you

everything and tell you about everything! Then the Ostankino estate and the Air Force

Academy were on the program ... The Petrovsky Palace, where it was located - the creation of the Russian architect Kazakov - fascinated the Fuhrer. The academic laboratories made me think - both the equipment of the academy and the Russian officer corps looked quite decent. They also stopped at the Russian National Gallery, donated to Moscow by the Tretyakov merchants and

named after them. There, standing in front of one of the paintings, the Fuhrer chuckled to himself and thought: "Well, now, I also found myself at a crossroads - like this Russian knight."

The second business conversation began again at the Kuntsevo dacha. This time, in addition to Stalin and Hitler, only Ribbentrop and Zhdanov settled in the armchairs by the

fireplace. "Mr. Molotov needs to resolve a number of issues that have arisen in the Council of People's Commissars, and he will join us a little later," Stalin explained briefly, but it could be assumed that he decided to more actively involve Zhdanov in the "German" affairs. Moreover, Zhdanov spoke German well.

Again the firewood crackled in the fireplace, again it was simple and cozy. "Where does he start today?" - the Fuhrer guessed and did not guess. Stalin unexpectedly began with problems that seemed to be remote from Russia both geographically and politically. He started with Iraq:

Mr Hitler! You have more than once suggested that we think about advancing to the Indian Ocean. But we have enough cases within the country. However, one must see the future, and I agree with you in the sense that the Soviet Union is not indifferent to the situation in the Middle and Near East. Yes, and in North Africa ... For Germany, this situation is, as I understand it, in general, of the utmost importance right now, today. Your Rommel started well, but got stuck ... And now you have a good opportunity to put pressure on the British in Africa from the rear. I mean the uprising in Iraq... Hitler and Ribbentrop looked at each other. Stalin saw this, of course,

but he did not give a look, but simply continued to say:

"Mr. Hitler, we must face the truth: the coup in Iraq was carried out by right-wing pan-Arab nationalists. This is not the first such coup in Iraq, and perhaps not the last... It could bring you many benefits - if successful. But he will be successful

can not...

- Why? "The

Gailani clique thinks only of its own clan interests... It does not want broad reforms in the interests of the people, it retains a monarchical regime, initially pro-English. Therefore, Gailani will not receive support from the people, and Gailani is afraid of him.

Hitler did not answer anything, pondered, thoughtfully swayed, without noticing it, with the toe of his glossy shoe, and Stalin calmly and methodically laid out argument after argument for him:

- Perhaps you intend to strengthen the support of Gailani from Germany and Italy ... But without the support of the people, power is doomed sooner or later - you and I, Herr Hitler, must understand this better than anyone else. We ourselves came to power as a result of mass support. And..." Stalin paused, "it's unlikely that you will be able to really help Iraq... And will Gailani want such large-scale support from you, which will definitely draw him into the war on your side? He would like the opposite - so that everyone falls behind him and he remains out of the battle ...

Stalin fell silent, looking at the Fuhrer still calmly. Hitler waited, certain that a sequel was about to follow, and indeed it followed:

Mr Hitler! The Gailani government itself
doomed and won't receive broad support inside Iraq, but... - But?
the Fuhrer immediately asked. "But
we offer you a concrete plan of our joint actions on a broad front. We
are already strong in a defensive war. We are not going to attack anyone
- we need peace. The Fuhrer involuntarily looked at Stalin with distrust,
but he

met the Fuhrer's gaze confidently and in an understanding tone said:

- Yes, we are constantly strengthening ... But - not against you!
However, it is precisely the Anglo-Saxons who are worried about our
strengthening, for they are the main force of that
plutocracy that you so often denounce. Hitler caught in the words of
the Russian leader an almost imperceptible irony, but the meaning of what
he heard could atone for any - even the most subtle -

mockery. Stalin spoke about the main thing: - The British cannot start
a land war against us, and a serious sea war too ... However, they can
bomb Baku from bases near Mosul. That is why we can help Iraq, but..."
Stalin paused again.

- But? the Fuhrer asked again. -

But precisely in order to ensure the neutrality of Iraq ... -

Neutrality? —

Yes... But for this it is necessary to replace Gailani with some more
broad-minded figure... One who would be ready for social reforms in Iraq,
relying on your and our support. If this new regime puts up effective
resistance to the British under the banner of protecting neutrality and
throws the British out of the country, then this will already be a help to you
and to us ... At first. - Do you have such a figure? - It can be found ...

However, two points are
important here - our
coherence and moderate but real reforms in Iraq. — And how
do you intend to transport aid to Iraq? - Obviously,
through Iran, with your own political assistance. Hitler was rocking his
shoes again.

Stalin suggested: - We could do this ... In Brest, I offered
to transfer
Romania to a hundred old tanks ...

Hitler nodded his head to indicate that he remembered this. - We will give them to the Romanians and give even more ... However we would like you Germans to talk to Antonescu about this. "Let's say," the Fuhrer dropped. - But that's not all ... We are ready to help Mussolini's African troops and your African Corps with some materials, but above all - tanks. Not new, but I have reason to believe that such tanks, after minor or medium repairs, will serve well ...

At that moment Molotov entered the room. Everyone stood up to greet the Russian prime minister, and when the courtesies ended and everyone settled back into their chairs, Stalin suggested:

- Since Vyacheslav Mikhailovich is aware of our proposals, we will not be distracted and can continue ... - Excellent, - the Fuhrer perked up and immediately asked: - And how much tanks will you highlight the Duce? - Not less than five hundred.

- Five hundred?! -

Yes ... No less. Hitler and Ribbentrop looked at each other again. "Further, we are transporting to Iraq—so far we can even Gailani, but with your own political assistance—up to a hundred tanks... On the move, in Iraq, it is difficult to repair them... Therefore, we will send vehicles there that are immediately quite suitable for combat. And we will also transport military materials for Iraq through Iran and Turkey - if you provide the Turks with air transit - military materials for Iraq on our old TB-3 bombers, using them as transport. If you provide them with protection, we can transfer up to thirty TB-3s to the Iraqis ... By the way, we are ready to transfer up to a hundred tanks to the Turks. But also in agreement with you and in such a way that the Turks knew about this

agreement ... Hitler was more and more surprised and "on the go" figured out how the "disposition" proposed by Stalin could change the overall situation? It turned out that she would immediately change seriously, perhaps

even unrecognizable! "And at the same time, it will be possible to use the entire potential accumulated for Barbarossa in a different way, and this ... And this is a blow to England ..." - a thought flashed through.

"On the whole," the Russian continued to surprise, "we are ready, in the form of military assistance, well, for a nominal fee, so as not to tease the dogs, to allocate up to a thousand old tanks to ensure the interests of the "axis" in Europe ...

He waited a bit and added: - So far,
up to a thousand, and so far - only old ones, some of which need repair ...
But ... Hitler could not stand it: -
Mr. Stalin, I must admit
to you that your "buts ..." every time I am extremely intrigued, but what follows
them so far does not disappoint me.

- I hope, Mr. Hitler, that this will continue in the future ... - So,
what is behind your last "but ..."? - Here's what ... Mr.

Hitler, let's be frank. My desk is littered with messages from abroad from our diplomats and journalists, intelligence reports, clippings from newspapers around the world, where the war between the USSR and Germany is presented as something already decided, inevitable ... The reports of our military from the border do not calm me very much either ... Fuhrer, in protest, he raised his hand and wanted to object, but Stalin stopped him with a

gentle gesture of his right hand and reminded him: "We speak frankly, and I know," Stalin singled out this "I know," about your hesitation ...

Yes, I myself hesitate ... And I understand your hesitation - it seems to you that Russia is really becoming England's last hope on the continent. The Fuhrer shuddered involuntarily - Stalin literally repeated his usual phrase at all the secret meetings of recent times, clearly hinting that the transcripts of

these meetings were not a secret to him. And Stalin, pretending not to notice anything, continued: - But, Mr. Hitler, Soviet Russia will not become the sword of England.

Hitler shuddered again, nervously shrugged his shoulders, and Stalin, in his muffled voice, said amazing things - even after Brest - things:

- We just met in Brest and got the first idea of each other's thoughts ... But then I told you that our tanks would never be the first to go to the other side of the Bug ... Today I offer you everything that has already been said, but I offer more ... Hitler looked askance at his interlocutor, looked away,

thinking, then looked Stalin straight in the face and asked:

- What?

"I propose a long-term alliance against the plutocracy, but for now we must preserve what has already been achieved and not let the warmongers pit us against each other. We can be useful to each other and complement each other. Both you and we have a lot of things to do within our countries... England is interfering with us today... Tomorrow America will be interfering. Hitting directly on England is difficult. But it is possible to cut off England in the East ...

- Mr. Stalin, you are now eliminating many of my doubts,
But...

- So, Mr. Hitler, you also have your "but" ... Everyone laughed briefly, and the Fuhrer said: - Well, I remove my "but ..." to listen to you to the end. - Thank you! I propose what I already suggested to you in Brest - the concentration of our troops in the border zone is too high. It's about warmth, summer ... All the same, the troops must be brought out into the air, to summer camps. And I propose to redeploy most of the Soviet and German formations within two weeks to a distance of fifty kilometers from the border, leaving only border units and small garrisons to maintain winter quarters in order ... We withdraw the rest mutually and create a strategic insurance zone ... Now Stalin exchanged glances with Molotov, and he finished for Stalin: - And if we agree on this, then tomorrow

we can formalize the accession of the USSR to the Pact of Three ... At the same

time, we will immediately increase the supply of strategic materials to you ... And by the fall, obviously, food supplies - for this year a very rich harvest is predicted.

Hitler considered. The way Stalin spoke proved that Stalin and Molotov became aware of the Fuhrer's intention to solve the "Russian question" by force, and - already this year. And what Stalin and Molotov were proposing now proved that in the near future, at least, the Russians do not want war. But he, the Fuhrer, has already declared to the generals that it makes no sense to conserve Russia as a potential enemy for decades, that it is better to defeat it now once and for all ... Stalin declares that the Reich should be seen in Russia

permanent ally.

What to choose? The withdrawal of troops is a disruption of all operational developments on Barbarossa. This, in fact, is the rejection of Barbarossa - at least for the 41st year. So what is next? Hitler

thought, Stalin waited. Finally, the Fuhrer threw his hands folded on his knees to the sides and decided: - In what time frame

can you deliver the first batch of tanks for the Duce? – Shipment to

Germany for transit to Italy, we can start even tomorrow," Stalin replied.

- Tomorrow?!! Hitler was surprised. - So fast? Can you do miracles? Stalin

smiled into his mustache:

- No! But I believe in the common sense of real leaders, and therefore I was sure in advance that you would accept my proposal, but time does not endure.

But then he corrected himself: "We have many years ahead to create and strengthen a strategic alliance, but tactically we are in time trouble ...

Hitler nodded his head in agreement, and Stalin said:

"Therefore, there are ten echelons with armored vehicles completely ready for transportation on the sidings in Minsk. Total - five hundred

units. - Wonderful! Hitler rubbed his hands, not restraining his excitement. - If you send them tomorrow, then immediately upon returning to Berlin, I will give the command of the Wehrmacht

appropriate orders and, I think, in a week at the most we will begin the withdrawal of troops. As for the Pact of the Four... -

Vyacheslav Molotov and Mr. Ribbentrop could work together with Comrade Zhdanov today and present the draft to us tomorrow morning so that our foreign ministers can sign everything in the afternoon... - So be it. A squirrel, carelessly jumping around the room, suddenly

jumped onto the Fuhrer's back, and he flinched as if from a blow, and then burst out laughing ... The others laughed too, and the squirrel jumped to the floor and, raising its luxurious tail upright, finely, finely fingered with its paws - as if applauded.

LATE evening was good - in less than a week May began, and Stalin invited the guests to take a walk. And soon they were walking along the alleys, inhaling the delicate aroma of the first daffodils. But thoughts about what was happening did not leave them, and the conversation again returned to the "Anglo-Saxon" topic.

- Yes ... England ... I would like to live in peace with her and did not imagine that such a petty reason as the arrogance of the Poles would lead Germany and Britain to war, - admitted

Hitler. - It is unlikely that the matter is only in the arrogance of the Poles, - Stalin remarked. - There

are more serious reasons ... - You know ... - Zhdanov stumbled over how to address everyone at once: both "gentlemen" are not suitable, and "comrades" are not right, and, without picking up anything, he simply continued: - I recently got caught in the hands of a book by a certain Manly Hall from California, published in San Francisco in the late twenties ... About Masonic, cabalistic and other mystical philosophy ... A thick tome, but there are amazing things ...

The Fuhrer was always sensitive to such moments and asked with interest:

- For example , Herr Zhdanov?

"He analyzes the direct and reverse sides of the Great Seal of the United States and sees in it a mass of Masonic symbols based on the number thirteen ... And he claims that the design of the seal adopted by Congress can only be explained when considering it as the emblem of the Masonic brotherhood ... Thirteen stars, thirteen letters in mottos, thirteen arrows in the paw of an eagle, the All-Seeing Eye and so on.

"The one dollar bill has the same symbolism," Ribbentrop promptly reminded him. "That's very

interesting, Herr Zhdanov!" "But more than that, Herr Hitler... This Hall also writes that the point is not only that many of the founders of the United States were Freemasons, but that they were assisted by secret and august organizations in Europe with the aim of creating this country with a special purpose known only a select few...

"Now this goal is already known to many," the Fuhrer muttered. - And this goal is to make money on Europe. "And not only in Europe," Molotov clarified. "Lenin wrote after the imperialist war," he sighed, remembering the unforgettable leader, Stalin, "that on every dollar there is a clod of dirt and a clod of blood ...

— Is it so? Ribbentrop was surprised. Stalin, smiling, confirmed and added: - And about the Treaty of Versailles, Ilyich wrote that he gives tens of millions of civilized people into slavery ... - It can't be! the Fuhrer jumped up. - Maybe, Mr. Hitler ... When we return to the house, I will find and give you the volume of Lenin, where it says this ... But you see how little we know each other ... - Apparently, you are right, Herr Stalin, - Hitler agreed. —

It turns out that Herr Lenin and I looked at Versailles in the same way?

Everyone was silent as they walked back to the house, but already at the threshold Hitler

said quietly to Zhdanov: "I ask you to tell Herr Stalin that I would like to start your last day in Moscow with a visit to the Mausoleum.

The LAST day of the visit was a golden day for foreign journalists. From early morning they crowded in the TASS building in anticipation of news and waited for them, when the head of the press department of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs announced at 11 o'clock Moscow

time: - Gentlemen! The USSR People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Comrade Molotov, and the German Foreign Minister, Mr. Ribbentrop, have just signed an agreement on the accession of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the Tripartite Pact in the presence of Comrade Stalin and German Reich Chancellor Adolf Hitler. In the dead silence, foreshadowing a flurry of questions and exclamations, there

was a booming sound of a blow of some object on the Tass parquet. It was from the hands of the New York Mr. Shapiro that the golden Parker fell.

THEY were again in Stalin's office in the Kremlin - it was time to say goodbye and go to the station. Stalin went up to the table, took from it three books in modest but solid bindings, and said:

"Mr. Hitler, I would like to give you this three-volume book, just published here in Russia... I don't agree with everything here, but I think that some of the ideas expressed here should be in the mind and heart of every Russian and every German. Hitler took the books and looked at the title, then at

Schmidt, who translated: "Bismarck ... Thoughts and Reminiscences ... Memoirs." Below it was: "Moscow, Gospolitizdat, 1941."

"Danke schön," the Fuhrer thanked briefly, and they exchanged with Stalin also a short, but quite strong shake of hands.

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At midnight, the Fuhrer's train was already approaching Brest - the Russians gave him a "green street", and soon he was on the territory

of the general government ... The Fuhrer almost did not go to bed that night, and while the wheelsets were being changed at the border, he received a courier from the General Staff. His first question was about Greece...

Athens is in our hands! Corinth is occupied ... The British began evacuating from the east coast of Attica, from Piraeus and from the Peloponnese, the general said.

- Great! Everything is going great! The Fuhrer said with satisfaction. After reviewing the papers, he signed them, marking the past day - April 25th. Among the documents approved by him was the directive of the OKW No. 28 according to the plan "Merkur" - on parachute landing on the island of Crete.

Returning to Berlin on the 26th, the Führer received the Hungarian regent Horthy the same day. 73-year-old Admiral Miklós Horthy von Nadbanya was an old Austro-Hungarian aristocrat, from 1909 he was the aide-de-camp of Emperor Franz Joseph I. He was brave, active, and in March 1918 he was appointed the last imperial fleet commander in the Adriatic. However, soon Austria-Hungary went into oblivion, and the new Austria, like the new Hungary, lost access to the sea. The rank of admiral Horthy remained. In 1938, he received dictatorial powers from the Hungarian parliament and finally introduced the state "ship" entrusted to him into the wake of

the policy of the Duce (with whom he had been friends since the late 20s) and a little later, the Fuhrer. Among the Hungarian elite, there were enough Germanophiles and Anglophiles, and Horthy, like the flesh of the flesh of his environment, was never an unrestrained supporter of the "axis", but he

was a realist. After the conclusion of the Sudetenland Agreement in Munich in 1938, he personally led the annexation of the southern part of Slovakia, where more than a million people lived, mostly Hungarians. And Horthy put more and more on the Reich. Hungary joined the Triple Alliance, and on April 6, 1941, England severed diplomatic relations with it. But at the end of April, a new American envoy, Pall, arrived in Budapest.

In April 1941, Soviet troops were moved to Galicia to the Carpathian border, and rumors began to spread among the Hungarian people about the arrival of the Red Army in Hungary. More than 300 people were arrested for their distribution, and it was already clear from this that behind such a rapid growth of sympathy for Russia one should have seen a hand not

Moscow, and London. Any such provocations were beneficial precisely
the English.

Horthy traveled to the Reich anxious, but returned relatively reassured. Both Hungary and Russia were now members of the same alliance, and the Fuhrer reassured him that conflict issues could always be settled. - So, Germany decided to have peace with the

Russians? Horthy asked bluntly. "Yes, Admiral," the Fuhrer answered him.

Chapter 9

On the first of May in Moscow, as always, there was a military parade on Red Square, and after it - a demonstration. Berlin celebrated Labor Day on this day. Soviet marches thundered, performed by Nazi orchestras, and over the capital of the Reich it was heard: "Higher and higher and higher we strive for the flight of our birds ..." and "We are blacksmiths, and our spirit is young, we forge the keys of happiness ... ". And over the

Arab East, the atmosphere was inflamed not only by the increasingly hot sun, but also by increasingly hot events. On April 25, 1941, Lieutenant General Paulus went to North Africa on an inspection trip. He had to find out the situation, assess the combat effectiveness of the African group, inspect the theater of operations and ... inform Rommel about the Wehrmacht's insignificant capabilities to help him.

The day before, Halder and Commander-in-Chief Brauchitsch once again discussed the situation in North Africa and came to the conclusion that nothing could be done beyond what had already been done. But the Fuhrer's Moscow visit, which had not yet ended by the time of Paulus' departure, was already invading the thoughts of the commander-in-chief and his chief of staff. And they understood that the decisions made on Africa might not be final.

In the spring of 1941 England had more than twenty divisions in Africa and the Middle East. Two of them - the 2nd and 50th armored - were pulled apart throughout the theater of operations from Libya to Palestine. By the beginning of May, the British Expeditionary Force left Greece, and the British forces found themselves, where they were densely concentrated, as in Tobruk besieged by Rommel, and where they were dispersed. In the Nile Valley there was one infantry division, in Palestine - also an infantry division and part of the 1st mechanized division, in Iraq - three infantry divisions, in Abyssinia-Ethiopia - six. One Australian division was in the Syrian area, except for

in addition, in the Mediterranean zone there were the 7th and 9th Australian divisions, the 2nd South African and New Zealand divisions.

The total number of British and allied troops reached more than 200 thousand people with the number of aircraft - more than 1300. A

lot ... The Germans under Rommel's hand fought with initiative and courage, but the lack of numerical superiority and unreliable communications made their position similar to that of a skilled tightrope walker. No matter how brave and skillful he may be, it is much easier to topple him than if he stood on a reliable earthly firmament ... Paulus

arrived at Rommel's headquarters just when the Headquarters in Zossen received Hitler's order to prepare data for the redeployment of troops and their withdrawal from Russian border. Initially - even before the Fuhrer's departure for Moscow - it was assumed that Paulus, as an emissary of Brauchitsch and Halder, would help Rommel launch a new successful offensive in Libya. And a preliminary attack on Tobruk was scheduled for May 1.

But, returning from Moscow, the Fuhrer on April 29 offensive canceled.

The day before, he had delivered a speech in Berlin before the party elite and Reichstag deputies, the essence of which could be put in two phrases: "Germany and Russia decided to go further along the path that was laid out by the 1939 Treaty of Friendship and Border ... And those forces in the world that counted on the mutual destruction of the two great European powers can put an end to their plans. But the speech itself was not short.

- Germans! National Socialists! Hitler began. "Amidst the hard work of the nation and its armed forces, we are starting a new stage in our history ... When on September 3, 1939, England declared war on the German Reich, it made an attempt to nip in the bud the unification and revival of Europe, attacking the most powerful country on the continent at the moment ... So it was already in 1914 ... Four years later, Germany was defeated, and the consequences turned out to be

terrible ... But we were defeated for two reasons - because of internal problems and because England and France managed to draw Russia into this war and we had to fight on two fronts ...

Here the Fuhrer appropriately recalled Bismarck's orders and again returned to the times of the Versailles Diktat: - While the

French government prophesied that twenty million Germans were superfluous and should be exterminated, the National Socialist movement began work to unite the German people and revive the empire ... And the policy of isolating Germany was again carried out ... Italy and Japan were also deprived of the right to participate in the world process ... And the hatred of the international conspiracy of reactionaries and democrats was directed against people who, like us, were forced to earn a living in the struggle for existence ... For twenty years I fought for the establishment of a new National Socialist order in Germany. With minimal intervention in the economy, this order not only

eliminated unemployment, but also allowed the worker to fully reap the results of his labor ... The success of our policy is manifested in the economic and social revival of the German people, which, systematically eliminating class and social differences, becomes a truly people's commune - the final phase of world development ... The good of Germany for me is above all! Guided by this principle, I have repeatedly offered peace to England, but in response she is expanding the zone of war more and more. Therefore, it is so important to preserve the largest possible zone of peace ... Russia and Germany established such a zone between themselves in August 1939 ...

Recently, this zone was expanded due to the pact between Russia and Japan ... My visit to Moscow strengthened this zone of peace even more, and now we have everything to completely eliminate the war zone in a short time and continue our creative work...

The German masses did not express their feelings as violently as they did after August 23, 1939, when the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact became a fact. The rumors about the upcoming war with the Russians were too persistent for the Germans to immediately seriously believe that they had avoided this war. Therefore, outwardly, the joy was restrained, but a new glint of hope appeared in the eyes. To win the war against the Russians, and even on two fronts, was an eternal stumbling block for the Germans. Now there was hope of winning the war with the Russians, when for the first time Britain would have to fight on two fronts. In any case, one could hope that the Russians would ease the position of the Reich, even if they did not oppose Britain.

In the generals, such a sharp turn, including a purely military one, aroused conflicting feelings. As professionals, staffers Brauchitsch, Halder, Keitel, Jodl, Warlimont and field marshals and generals in combat understood the danger of the Barbarossa venture. But the Fuhrer convinced them that the Reich had no other choice than a quick and quick strike on Russia. And they set themselves up; their headquarters and troops, strained their nerves and the nerves of their subordinates to that super-tense state, which is similar to the state of a tightly stretched bowstring of a bow made for battle.

Pull tighter - the bowstring will burst. Keep the string taut for a long time - it will weaken. And now the Fuhrer changed everything in one moment - the bowstring had to be carefully and carefully lowered ... I had to change all plans, all calculations, all documents and, even more difficult, to perform real actions that are directly opposite to those that have been taken in recent months. So the generals, having

dumped the burden of the Barbarossa, on the one hand, breathed a sigh of relief. But on the other hand, they could not help but feel empty. Something similar already happened with the Sea Lion operation, when a lot of ink, fuel and nerves were also spent on preparing the invasion of Britain, and then a "lights out" was played, but ... But here the stakes

were higher, and more effort was expended. Hitler was well aware of this and on April 29 gathered all the commanders of the military branches to explain the new situation ...

- Lord! he began. - As you understand, everything changes dramatically ... However, sometimes wisdom lies not in action, but in refraining from action ... The Russians last year, at the time of our triumphs in the West, were able to get fat pieces without a war, but, except for Northern Bukovina and Lithuania, it was agreed mutually. Nevertheless, Molotov in Berlin put forward conditions unacceptable to the Reich - Stalin was not inclined to take into account our interests in Finland, in Bulgaria, in the Balkans in general ... And his behavior made it possible to suspect him either in collusion with the Britons, or - in a secret intention to help weaken the "axis". I had every reason to believe that he wanted to keep a free hand for any policy in the future ...



Hitler knew how to convince the audience, and now, after meetings with Stalin, he has gained new reserves of logic. The consistency and calmness of Stalin had already begun to affect him, and the field marshals, generals and admirals, listening to him, caught new tones in the Fuhrer's speeches - unusual, but attractive ...

The Fuhrer said: -

At the same time, I did not have complete information about the internal situation of communist Russia, and this determined my decision to invade Russia in the spring or early summer of this year ... You, gentlemen, did a lot to ensure that such a campaign - if it took place - it became successful. However, its necessity was dictated primarily not by military or economic considerations, but by political considerations. I have repeatedly emphasized this before you in

recent months...



Hitler fell silent, peering at the tensely listening generals. Sometimes he noticed at his meetings even dozing, but now

all eyes were fixed on him, and he, shining with blue eyes, caught in response the sparkle of attentive eyes.

- Lord! he continued. "Peoples are born and become mature... A person can make mistakes, but the leader has no right to do so!" A leader's mistake is the death of an idea. And a people without an idea is doomed to degeneration and death... The ideas of National Socialism are attractive, but in communism for the common man there is also a lot of attractive things... And in the thirties, the Jewish-Bolshevik rulers from Moscow, through the hands of the Comintern, steadily tried to extend their influence to us and other European countries ...

A stir began in the hall, but it immediately stopped, because the Fuhrer explained: "However,

since it is now becoming clear to me, great changes have taken place in Russia - Jewish influence has been radically undermined. The resignation of the Jew Litvinov was an important milestone in Russia's evolution towards its own national idea... The Russians abandoned the ambitions of a "world conflagration." The key moment for me was their behavior towards the Yugoslavs. Simovich's officers came to Moscow, but left empty-handed ... The Fuhrer fell silent, grinned and said: - And I brought from Moscow

the accession of Russia to the Triple

Alliance, which can already be called the Fourth ... If we remember history, gentlemen, we will see that the defeat Napoleon was the result of the fact that he could not keep Alexander's Russia in the regime of the continental blockade of England. However, Stalin is not the hesitant Russian tsar. And today we have reason to consider our eastern rear secured. Tomorrow the Russians may enter the general ranks already as our direct comrades in the common struggle against

Anglo-Saxons...

A contradictory rumble swept through the hall, but the Fuhrer stopped it with his hand

and said: "The Russians have already begun shipping five hundred tanks for us, which we will basically hand over to the Duce and Rommel. In addition, the abandonment of Barbarossa frees up such reserves for intensifying the African campaign that we can now operate there without haste, stepping up our strikes sequentially, stage by stage.

The generals became more and more animated - they were already considering new tasks, new goals and new options in their minds. And there really was something to think about ... In one day, you could not transfer forces from near Warsaw to Tobruk, but the main thing now was that they were - these new and huge forces! And the Fuhrer also added oil to the brain "bearings" of the generals:

- Lord! In addition to our Rommel's blows from the West, we, together with the Russians, will try to provide the Britons with problems from the East ... We have a lot of new work to do, comrade!

The Führer, however, had an explanation also with the Duce. And almost immediately upon his return to Berlin, Ribbentrop went to Rome. His meeting with Mussolini and Ciano was, however, peaceful. The Duce did not show any special emotions about the unexpected new step of the Fuhrer and immediately declared: -

Spain and Russia did not enter the united front of Europe against England ... Therefore, from my point of view, it is beneficial if a policy of cooperation is pursued with Russia. Now, as I understand it, Herr Ribbentrop, you are using this very opportunity?

- That's right ... We now have good relations with Russia treaties... -

With us, Mr. Ribbentrop, by the way - too... Ribbentrop breathed more freely - the conceited and touchy Duce did not count, it seems that he was bypassed even here. When the Duce found out about the opportunity to get tanks, he was delighted like a child:

"Stalin is giving me five hundred tanks?! As many as five hundred? You do you hear, Galeazzo?.. Stalin!!!

Ciano nodded politely. Ribbentrop tried to cool down the Duce's enthusiasm a little: - But Stalin honestly warned that these were not new tanks, they needed to be put in order! And some of them will go to Rommel. Oh, let's fix them!

But the tanks are from Stalin!.. This or...

Mussolini thought for a moment, and then said - as if to himself:

"Maybe I should meet him too."

And IN ZOSENNE began to prepare new orders for Africa. Taking into account the Barbarossa, only 50 aircraft were previously allocated for the transfer of troops to Libya. Their numbers now tripled, and soon two infantry regiments, a reinforced engineer battalion, and a new machine-gun battalion were airlifted to reinforce Rommel. For the bombing of Tobruk, a bomber regiment and four attack squadrons of Ju-87

Stuka dive bombers from the 2nd Air Fleet were supposed to fly from Sicily to the airfields in Derna and El-Gazala near Tobruk. And that was not all! The tanks that began to arrive from Russia were hastily repaired in Italy, and the Czech Republic, and the Italians took over the transfer of them near Tobruk, although the Duce decided to

use some of them in Abyssinia, where, it seems, the British were going to attack in earnest. From the beginning of 1941, the Italian fleet ensured the transfer to Libya of such quantities of cargo that, on the whole, satisfied the needs of the Italo-German troops in a monthly tonnage of

70,000 tons. Almost 80,000 were deployed in February, and about 100,000 in March. In April, almost 58,000 tons of cargo and 24,000 tons of fuel arrived in Libya. But success was achieved more due to "Machiavellian, as Rommel wrote, maneuvers of Italian admirals and commanders of escort groups" than due to security forces. Since the end of April, the protection of convoys with transports became possible to improve due to the allocation of additional air cover forces, and losses - although they were still small and did not exceed 9% in March - immediately decreased. And the chances of success near Tobruk immediately increased. In

early May, Paulus reported to Zossen from Tripoli that in the event of the fall of the fortress, Rommel should be ordered not to burrow, but to ensure the defense of Cyrenaica at the line of the Siwa oasis - Es-Sollum - Bardia, placing the troops in a ledge on the flank against an attempt to envelop.

“No advance beyond the Siwa-Es-Sollum line, except for reconnaissance groups,” **Paulus wrote to Halder**, “even if the enemy retreats further ... Then it is necessary to put in order and replenish the formations and organize the protection of the coast.”

The methodical Paulus went to the commander-in-chief and Halder as favorites and sat in Tripoli, working with maps. Erwin Rommel was a fidget, and his light "Storch" ("Stork") flew to the troops every now and then. Rommel was in a happy state of anticipation of victory, because he already had far more troops than he had calculated just a fortnight ago. The African Corps was continuously replenished with troops, tanks, and, which is especially joyful, a lot of fuel and lubricants, so needed in Africa, were now flowing by air and by sea. And the "Desert Fox" was sure in advance that the "kangaroo rats" from the 7th British armored division, which wore the emblem of an exotic rodent, would not resist its tankers.

The DATE for the start of the assault on Tobruk has now been moved from May 1st to May 15th. So, instead of launching a powerful offensive on the Eastern Front that day, as previously thought, the Reich and Rome launched their offensive in the African theater of operations. Success was immediately apparent ... And by May 20, Tobruk fell ... The overseas parts of Britain pressed ashore did not have the possibility of evacuation, and about 20 thousand people were captured along with equipment. Rommel immediately wanted to advance further - beyond the line of the Egyptian Es-Sollum, but Paulus, through the commander-in-chief, managed to get the Fuhrer's order to stabilize the front. However, during the turmoil, Rommel managed to reach Sidi on the seashore and occupy the Halfaya Pass - already on the territory of Egypt ... And his thoughts were near El Alamein and further - in the Nile Valley. In the meantime, on the left, he had the sea, on the right - the plateau of the Libyan desert, abruptly ending to the sea, and southeast of the plateau - the depression of Qattara.

There were no roads to Egypt, except for the paved highway Via Balbia, built by the Italian marshal Balbo in the 30s. But the hot khamsin blowing from the Sahara could make highway traffic impossible in a matter of hours, better than any British barrier could. From Zossen they insisted on a pause. Rommel had to obey and stop advancing, although the Fuhrer demanded from Brauchitsch that Rommel's actions were not constrained by any higher authority. However, one could really stop for a while, look around and pay attention to Malta. Based

on this "unsinkable aircraft carrier", the British could successfully block the sea communications of the African Corps. The capture of French Tunisia, where General de Gaulle, who was connected with London, was in charge, would also be an important matter. One way or another, in the Egyptian direction, the Wehrmacht took so far

strategic break. It

seemed that the English army "Nile" received an unexpected time-out for it. But it wasn't. On the eastern flank of the front in Asia, Britain was also in for unpleasant surprises. The field of the anti-British coup in Baghdad On April 3, 1941, the Gailani government was formed. On April 8, Churchill ordered the invasion of Iraq, and by April 28, 1941, British units transferred from India occupied coastal Basra. The Iraqis responded by blockading the 2,500-strong British garrison in Habbaniya on the night of April 30.

On May 9, the clergy declared a "holy war" against the British, and the green banner of "jihad" was raised over Iraq. And

on May 3, 1941, Gailani, through our plenipotentiary in Ankara Vinogradov, proposed establishing diplomatic relations between Moscow and Baghdad. On May 13, Izvestia published a message from the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs that "the Government of the USSR ... accepted the proposal of the Iraqi government ...". And on May 16, 1941, not the plenipotentiary, but the USSR ambassador to Turkey, Vinogradov, in Ankara exchanged notes with the envoy of the Kingdom of Iraq on the establishment of official diplomatic, consular and trade

relations. For half a month between May 3 and 16, Sergei Alexandrovich Vinogradov managed to change the rank of Plenipotentiary Representative of the USSR to the new rank of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, introduce

Presidium of the Supreme Council of May 9, 1941. Now he, still representing the USSR in Turkey, "kept in touch" with Baghdad.

Iran reacted calmly to the new situation in Iraq, and on May 10, 1941, Iranian Prime Minister Mansur told our Ambassador Filimonov in Tehran that Iran was satisfied that the countries friendly to Iran, the Soviet Union and Iraq, would soon establish official relationship.

Gailani, through Vinogradov, was given to understand that if his government was loyal to the new Quadruple Alliance and leaned towards a more balanced social policy, then Russia was ready to come out with a declaration recognizing the full independence of Iraq and provide military assistance to Iraq with equipment. Gailani was also promised help from Berlin, coordinated with the Russians.

The Moscow meeting of Stalin and Hitler, developing the line of Brest, was already beginning to lead the peoples into a future that was quite unexpected for the Golden Elite...

There were 40,000 soldiers in the Iraqi Army: four divisions and one motorized mechanized brigade. The Air Force had 60 aircraft. This, of course, was not enough - British troops from India continued to arrive in Basra, in Palestine the British hastily formed the "Habbani Detachment" as part of one incomplete division to deblockade Habbaniya. And in Berlin, plans were hastily drawn up for a general uprising of the Arabs against England. A "Special

Working Headquarters F" was urgently created, headed by General Felmi. The military mission in Iraq, headed by Felmi, was to become a center for coordinating military operations in the Middle East and a reconnaissance and sabotage center. The Führer also sent a personal message to King Ibn Saud of Saudi Arabia offering to lead an uprising in exchange for Ibn Saud being proclaimed king of all Arabs. Ibn Saud focused, however, not on Berlin, but on London. He refused. The enraged Fuhrer ordered the envoy to Saudi Arabia and the experienced intelligence officer Grobbe to carry out sabotage in the Saudi oil fields.

Atmosphere heated up. For region, rich flammable natural and human material, it was, of course, dangerous. The dockworkers of Basra and the peasants of southern Iraq could become good assistants to the saboteurs of the envoy Grobba and good soldiers if they got weapons.

In early May, the Petain government agreed to sending German military equipment through French Syria, and on May 12, 1941, the first small group of aircraft from Germany and Italy, having made intermediate landings at Syrian airfields, reached Baghdad. Fuel for them had to come from Beirut. And through Iran, the first batches of weapons from Russia came to Iraq. Tanks

were also delivered through Iran. The advance of the "Habbaniya Detachment" first slowed down, and then serious battles unfolded in the Habbaniya region. The Germans also fought here along with the Iraqis. Of course, everything happened: the son of the former Minister of War, Major von Blomberg, flew to Mosul on a special mission of the General Staff, but his plane was shot down by the rebels themselves. Blomberg is dead. And there was already a real battle going on for Iraq. Under the joint pressure of Berlin and

Moscow, Gailani increasingly lost his inclination to neutrality, and he had to agree to the inclusion of representatives of the National Reform Party of Hikmet Suleiman in the government. In a matter of days, the number of Iraqi armed forces has grown by half due to volunteers.

The British made an attempt to achieve a turning point by intensifying the air war. On May 16, 1941, the German auxiliary cruiser Penguin was destroyed in the Persian Gulf, and the next day British aircraft raided Damascus. But this did not improve the position of the Britons - for the first time since Dunkirk, the French fighters and anti-aircraft guns fired not at the Germans, but at the former allies. An English consul was urgently expelled from Damascus. The Germans, for their support by the French in the Syrian issue, released 80,000 French prisoners of war. And May 1941 dominated the Eastern Hemisphere more and more. The trees

were wrapped in flowers, the sky was painted in azure tones - despite death, battles, tears of widows and orphans.

On May 18, 1941, General Halder got to Berlin and was in the theater in the evening. The operetta "Redoubt of Violets" was on, the general was distracted from the headquarters whirlwind and relaxed. Thousands of kilometers from the capital of the Reich, at that time, the Middle Eastern Redoubt arose against dominance of the Anglo-Saxons there.

British Ambassador to Moscow Cripps was beside himself. After the Fuhrer's departure from the Russian capital, London fell into a state that is called "groggy" in boxing. Cripps experienced something similar. If before he could not get an appointment with Molotov, now he did not immediately get even to Vyshinsky. Having finally received an invitation to the

NKID mansion, Cripps almost burst into the office and announced from the threshold: "Mr. Vyshinsky! On behalf of my government, I send you a note verbale of protest!

"For what reason, Mr. Cripps?" - In recent days, you have sent large consignments of weapons, including heavy ones, to Italy and the Middle East. "I have no data on this, Mr.

Cripps, but if it was even so, I could answer you with three words: "So what?" - How so what? This is a gross violation of neutrality! Mr Cripps! We are not at war with Italy, like you, but on the contrary, we have a treaty of friendship with her. Recently, we have also been bound with Italy by obligations under the Quadruple Alliance, although we stipulated that joining the Tripartite Pact does not oblige the USSR to join actions against England ... And if the neutral USA can supply you with the latest "flying fortresses", then why should we be forbidden on a commercial basis to supply a friendly power with old military equipment that we no longer need?

- According to my information, a German military contingent proceeded through the Soviet Union to Finland, Mr. Vyshinsky! - I, Mr. Cripps, have no data on this either, but the precedent here was created by strictly neutral Sweden. And we are free - if we consider

necessary, to do the same ... - But
your actions in Iraq ... - Forgive me for
interrupting you, Mr. Cripps, but Iraq for Russia is a sovereign state, and rather your
actions in Iraq can be regarded as **aggression** . Besides..." here Vyshinsky grinned,
"according to our information, your government has agreed to the presence of American
troops in the Persian Gulf area... Although Vyshinsky was telling the absolute truth, Cripps
exploded: "I have no data on this matter! - You see, Mr. Cripps, then you have no data,
then -

me... And I suggest this...

Vyshinsky frankly scoffed, but Cripps was already
so demoralized that he simply asked:
- What? -

And here's what, Mr. Cripps ... Let's each remain with our ignorance and let's not bother
trying to get rid of him. Let's stay with our own...

On MAY 23, 1941, the Fuhrer signed Directive No. 30 "Middle East" and declared that
it was necessary to accelerate the development of events in the Middle East by supporting
Iraq. After the Fuhrer's visit to Moscow, the French in

Vichy began to be more attentive to the interests of the Germans, and in Syria, the
French High Commissariat of General Dentz had previously provided units of the Foreign
Legion at the disposal of the Reich. And if you remember that there were quite a few Germans
among the legionnaires, then the courtesy of the High Commissioner of Syria was more than
welcome. Now, after the fall of Tobruk and the emergence of the Iraqi front, the opportunity
arose to strike at Haifa, where the oil pipeline from

Iraq ended, to further complicate the life of the Britons. But from British Palestine and
Transjordan, the 7th Australian Division, the Indian Brigade, the British units of the 1st Cavalry
Division and the Free French units of General de Gaulle under the command of General
Catrou moved to Beirut and Damascus.

At one time, France received the former Turkish possessions - Syria and Lebanon, according to the Sevres Peace Treaty with defeated Turkey, signed on August 10, 1920. For twenty years, the French have not won much love from the local population. Now de Gaulle announced his intention to abolish the mandate regime and give Syria and Lebanon independence. On May 20, 1941, he telegraphed Katra to Cairo: "We must advance on Damascus even with one battalion. The psychological effect will do the rest."

Catru took the hint and began to "advance" on Damascus with **six** battalions, tightly surrounded by the Britons, Australians, Indians and other "defenders of the independence of the Levant." Dentz also had about 40 thousand people (of which only a third were Europeans) with tanks and artillery. Fighting began in

Lebanon and Syria - unsuccessful for the Katru battalions and the "international" British units. Before that, Dentz had an advantage in aviation (100 against 60), and now the Germans, due to the beginning of the redeployment of Luftwaffe units from Poland, were able to strengthen the Kesselring 2nd Air Fleet, and a group from the Africa squadron flew to Syria and Lebanon from El-Gazala - three squadrons of Messerschmitt-109. Oberfenrich Hans-Joachim Marcell, who received the Iron Cross 1st class for the battles over the English Channel, now shot down the Hurricanes over Damascus, already earning the Knight's Cross. The lack of flank support from Iraq

also had an effect - the British there had no time for strikes against the Vichy Levant. But two Wehrmacht grenadier battalions were airlifted there. By joint efforts, the British were squeezed out of the Levant, but the raid on Haifa had to be postponed for the time being ... But Felmi, who arrived in Baghdad, took revenge on organizing sabotage. By May 29, British troops that had arrived in Iraq from Egypt, Palestine and Transjordan were pushed back from Baghdad and gradually retreated to Basra.

The British were now pressed from all sides, and this frustrated all plans for an offensive in Abyssinia. On May 19, the entry of British forces into Addis Ababa and the "Lion of the tribe of Judah" were scheduled, Emperor Haile Selassie I was already sitting on his suitcases in London, but now things were stalling. The Italian troops still did not show miracles of heroism, but the success near Tobruk and the help of Moscow allowed the Duce

transfer the Ariete armored division to Abyssinia, and the general change in the African situation in favor of the Axis made it possible for the Italians to avoid surrender and somehow stabilize the front.

In the near future, the possibility of an exit of the Axis troops to Alexandria, Cairo and the Suez Canal loomed. At the same time, it is unlikely that King Farouk of Egypt and his troops would have helped the British very much. Suez did not belong to Egypt, but Egypt's help to the Germans could give him a share in the control of Suez and in the income from it. In addition, Farouk generally sympathized with the Reich.

And on MAY 20, 1941 on the heads of the British garrison in Crete the paratroopers of Luftwaffe General Student rained down.

The week before, on May 12, Kurt Arno Benno Student turned 51 years old. In World War I, he fought as a pilot, was promoted to captain, received two Iron Crosses, and from 1924 actively participated in the secret reconstruction of the German Air Force. By the time of the operation on Crete, Student commanded the XI (airborne) corps and directly supervised the Cretan operation according to the Merkur plan. The island of Crete in the Aegean

was of course of strategic importance. By making it their base, England could bomb the Ploiesti oil region. Germany, having it as its base, actually locked the Black Sea straits for the English fleet and blocked possible English activity in Romania and Bulgaria. In addition, the exceptionally favorable location of the island made it very useful for the purposes of the struggle for North Africa, the Levant (Syria, Lebanon and Palestine), as well as for Egypt and Suez. In terms of influence on Turkey, Crete also meant a lot. The British replaced the Greek garrison of the island with their own back in November 1940, after the start of the Italo-Greek war. After the

evacuation of the British Expeditionary Force from Greece in April 1941, the New Zealand General Freiberg had 27,500 people at his disposal: half were British, a quarter -

Australians and a quarter are New Zealanders. There were also Greek units in Crete - however, very weak ones.

Bernard Cyril Freiberg, only a year older than Student, was also a bright personality. A native of Richmond near London, at the age of 17 he became the champion of New Zealand in the 100-yard race, was fond of polo and sailing, fought in France, was seriously wounded, and in 1918 commanded a brigade. He knew his business and organized the defense of the island properly, so the Luftwaffe paratroopers had a hard time in Crete from the

very beginning. Operation Mercure was primarily an air operation, although it was supported by the German and Italian fleets. The original and bold plan proceeded from the fact that the bases of the Luftwaffe were located at a distance of no more than 240 kilometers from Crete, which was less than the range of German aircraft. The British air bases in Egypt, Malta and the Egyptian Mediterranean coast were, respectively, 700, 1000 and 500 kilometers away.

For air cover, suppression of the English fleet and support on the battlefield, Student had 280 bombers, 150 dive bombers and 180 fighters. But Freiberg was waiting for an airborne assault, so it was not possible to take him by surprise. In addition, in the first phase of the operation, the Germans could only count on light weapons, that is, pistols, machine guns, machine guns, grenades and - at best - light mortars. So Crete was not easy for them ... In the first "wave" to the

south of Cania and the airfield in Maleme, a reinforced parachute regiment landed, and stubborn battles immediately ensued there. It was even more difficult with the second "wave" of landing against the airfields in Rethymnon and Heraklion ... It was not possible to capture them immediately. Heavy weapons were supposed to be delivered to the landing force by an auxiliary transport fleet, hastily recruited from small ships and boats in Piraeus. But mistakes and delays led to the defeat of the British. However, in the morning, two English cruisers and two destroyers were sunk by German bombers, and the battleship and two cruisers were heavily damaged and barely left for Alexandria ... There was a real small naval war around Crete, and mutual losses in it kept growing. Ground combat was also heavy. The

paratroopers did not have special tropical equipment, and the island already had

suffocating heat. Maquis and freegana became a particular problem. There are few real forests in Crete - they were cut down there a long time ago, but on the other hand, there are enough dense, impenetrable thickets of intertwined thorny bushes, trees and grasses, mostly 3-5 meters high, and sometimes up to 10 ... This is maquis. Wild pistachio and myrtle, strawberry and juniper, tree-like heather and wild olives woven into something unified, saved the British from the need to stretch barbed wire fences around the island ... Moreover, on the ground, maquis successfully (for the defenders) complemented the freegan - almost a continuous "carpet" from prickly herbs: lavender, sage, thyme, milkweed, astragalus, sainfoin and acantolimon... Fans of exotic aromas would give their lives for the

opportunity to smell this symphony of smells. The paratroopers of the Student had to risk their lives in these fragrant "obstacles" in the truest sense of the word. Dense vegetation helped the enemy to both defend successfully and skillfully disguise himself: the Germans knew the island from maps, and the British and Greeks knew each path in the maquis. But gradually the advantage passed to the attackers. On May 26, 1941, Freiberg

reported that the situation on the island was hopeless. London was beside himself and demanded to keep Crete at any cost. However, on the night of May 28-29, the loading of troops began on the northern coast of Heraklion. At the same time, a formation of three cruisers and six destroyers lost four ships ... But in four hours, out of 10 thousand people who were waiting for loading in Hora Sfakion, 7 thousand were taken on board.

In total, it was possible to evacuate either 15 or 17 thousand people ... German losses were also high. If for the entire Balkan campaign the Germans lost 1206 killed, 3901 wounded and 548 missing, then Crete cost them only 2071 killed. 2594 paratroopers were wounded and 1888 people (maquis yes plus mountains) were missing. The Fuhrer was dejected,

and this is also why the prospects for the Maltese operation "hung" ... The annoyance was all the greater because just at the same time, on May 27, 1941, Germany lost the pride of the Kriegsmarine, the battleship Bismarck, in the Atlantic. Launched in 1939, with a displacement of 42 thousand tons, she was one of the most

modern and powerful warships of the world: eight 380 mm guns in four main caliber turrets, a dozen 150 mm, 16 105 mm, 60 20 mm anti-aircraft guns, 8 torpedo tubes, 6 airborne aircraft with a double catapult.

It was power! And all of it went to the bottom 450 miles west of the French Brest. But three days earlier, the Bismarck had sunk the favorite of the English fleet, the powerful and fast battlecruiser Hood and six destroyers.

Regarding the evacuation of Crete and the death of the Bismarck, the Turks said: "The British still have many islands, but the Germans do not have a second Bismarck." However, it was still just a biting phrase. Strategically, the capture of Crete justified itself: the oil fields of Ploiesti were now beyond the reach of British bombers.

The British were getting hotter in the Mediterranean, in the Near and Middle East.

The forefield of Suez and Egypt was under the control of the "axis".

Chapter 10

On May 5, 1941, Stalin, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, addressed the graduates of the military academies of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army.

— Comrades! - he turned to the new "academicians", - you left the army three or four years ago, now you will return to its ranks and you will not recognize the army. The Red Army is no longer the same as it was a few years ago ...

Stalin talked about new divisions and new armor, about new planes and new guns, but he wouldn't be Stalin if he didn't talk about people and urge his listeners to **think**.

"You will come to the units from the capital," he said. "The commander must not only be able to command, give orders, this is not enough... You must be able to talk with the soldiers, explain current events to them... Our great generals have always been closely connected with the soldiers. We must act in a Suvorov way... And then, immediately, Stalin turned to Germany: -

You will be asked, where are the reasons why Europe has turned upside down, why Germany is winning? Why did Germany have a better army? It is a fact that Germany turned out to have a better army both in terms of technology and organization. Stalin carefully peered into the ranks of people in uniform. Much depended on

them in the coming years, and much depended on how independent they would be. And independence is impossible without the habit and ability to think. And so he asked

everyone and

everyone: - How can this be explained? And he

explained himself: "Lenin said that defeated armies learn well. This thought of Lenin applies to nations as well. Broken nations learn well. The German army, being defeated in 1918, studied well.

The military thought of the German army moved forward. The army was armed with the latest technology, trained in new methods of warfare ... Stalin chuckled:
- In

general, there are two
sides to this issue ... It is not enough to have good equipment, organization, you need to have more allies. Precisely because the defeated armies learn well, Germany took into account the experience of the past ... In 1870, the Germans defeated the French. Why? Because they fought on the same front. The Germans were defeated in 1916–1917. Why? Because they fought on two fronts. The audience was military, academic, military history knowing. And those sitting in the

hall could not fail to catch that here Stalin was directly conveying the idea that Germany won when it had neutral Russia behind it, and lost when fighting with it.

Stalin developed this idea: - In
order to prepare well for war, it is not only necessary to have a modern army, but it is necessary to prepare the war politically. What does it mean to prepare for war politically? Politically preparing for war means having a sufficient number of reliable allies from neutral countries. Germany, starting the war, coped with this task, but England and France did not cope with this task ... This is the political and military reasons for the defeat of France and the victories of Germany ...

By "neutral countries" Stalin meant, of course, the USSR. And in Stalin's speech, his reflections and conclusions drawn from two meetings with the Fuhrer were clearly visible. Yes, choosing an ally is everything! The right choice ensures victory. Wrong sooner or later leads to defeat.

Having understood this fully, both Moscow and Berlin could only win! On May 7, 1941,

the Decree of the Presidium was published in Izvestia
Supreme Soviet of the USSR:

"Appoint Comrade Stalin Joseph Vissarionovich
Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR.
Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR
M. Kalinin
Secretary of the Supreme Soviet of the
USSR **A.**
Gorkin Moscow, Kremlin, May 6, 1941.

The replacement of Molotov in his post by Stalin after the Moscow meeting looked like an act undesirable for the British, just because Molotov was still rather cool about the idea of an alliance with the Reich, and his position did not always coincide with Stalin's. The reason was, perhaps, Molotov's "night cuckoo" - Polina Zhemchuzhina. The daughter of a small-town tailor Pearl Karp was seven years younger than

Molotov and married him twenty-three years - in 1921 ... Pearl's sister emigrated to Palestine during the Civil War, while Pearl herself joined the RCP (b) and the Red Army in 1918, and there it went: the political department, the army club, the underground in Kiev, workers' faculties, city committees, metropolitan district committees ... post of people's commissar of the fishing industry. Then her career went downhill, and at the XVIII Party Conference Pearl was removed from the list of candidates for members of the Central Committee. But they didn't take her out of her husband's bed, and the Soviet prime minister, although he was a "hard-core" Bolshevik, loved his wife. The wife did not interrupt relations with foreign relatives, but neither Pearl herself nor her relatives liked the Germans. From here, perhaps, Molotov's "German" hesitations came. On the essence of the new Moscow appointments, Schulenburg reported to Berlin on May 7, 1941 in cipher number 1092:

"Stalin takes responsibility for all the actions of the Soviet government, both in internal and external spheres ... This will put an end to the unnatural situation when the power of the recognized and undisputed leader of the peoples of the Soviet Union was not based on

Constitution ... I am convinced that Stalin will use his new position in order to take a personal part in the preservation and development of good relations between the USSR and Germany ... "

Molotov remained the first deputy of the new prime minister and People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs. Ivan Tevosyan was appointed the second First Deputy

Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars. An energetic Armenian Vano, the son of a tailor Tevadros from Azerbaijani Shusha, he eventually began to respond to the patronymic name Ivan Fedorovich. And at the same time, he mastered well not only Russian, but also German. A metallurgist by profession, a graduate of the Mining Academy, Tevosyan trained in Germany, was familiar with Krupp. Born in 1902, a Bolshevik from the age of sixteen, at the age of 29 he became the chief engineer of Elektrostal near Moscow, a new, rare ferrous metallurgy plant, and soon headed the Spetsstal association of high-quality steel and ferroalloy plants. Then he was deputy commissar of the defense industry, people's commissar of shipbuilding, ferrous metallurgy. And so he was appointed the second First Deputy Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars. The third position in the Council of People's Commissars

was occupied from February 1941 by Lavrenty Beria. Previously, Stalin's right hand in the Council of People's Commissars was Molotov. But he - in vain that he studied for a year at the St. Petersburg Institute of Technology, as a young man went into professional revolutionary work, and after the revolution - into pure politics. Molotov could not competently delve into the details of the management of the national economy. Tevosyan, on the contrary, was an engineer and - at the same time - a son of his time in full. The new era and the new Russia gave him

both knowledge and the widest field of activity for their application and development. After the Brest and Moscow meetings between Stalin and Hitler, Russia increasingly turned towards Germany. It was still far from a lasting alliance, but such a figure as Tevosyan was ideally suited for the new

course. This determined Stalin's decision to sharply raise Tevosyan. Berlin app

And Stalin felt it. The withdrawal of troops from the borders took place calmly and without delay - in stages and under general control. But Stalin was even more convinced by the fact that the Germans had become more active in Libya and in the Mediterranean Sea and were transferring troops there from Poland, including the most effective means of a first strike: aviation bombers.

parts.

So, in the West, things seemed to be going well ...

They seemed to be getting better in the Far East as well. And sometimes - in terms of very unexpected. On March 12, 1941, Pra Prasana Bidiyayud, the envoy of the Kingdom of Thailand to Germany, met with Molotov in Moscow. The reason for the meeting was extraordinary - Bidiyayud and Molotov were to exchange notes on the establishment of diplomatic, consular and trade relations.

The ancient land of Siam was an impossible and unknown exotic for the Russians, and for, say, the British, a source of cheap tin and cheap rice. There were also tungsten, antimony, lead and such tidbits as teak, iron and mahogany in Thailand ... For some time now there has also been a very strong national bourgeoisie, and this already ensured a conflict between the Thais and the Anglo-Saxons. In neighboring Burma, a similar conflict has already reached such intensity that in 1940 the main Burmese political party, the People's Revolutionary Party, proclaimed the slogan of the violent overthrow of British rule with the support of ... Japan. The Thais, who came into conflict with French Indochina, also counted on this support. And in March 1941, through the mediation of Japan, Thailand received a significant part of those lands that

considered their originals.

In the same March, Thailand established diplomatic relations with us. And in the light of our imminent pact with Japan, this was a gratifying fact. However, the most important for us were, of course, relations with Japan itself. April 25, 1941 Konstantin

Alexandrovich Smetanin, who had only half a month left to be the USSR envoy to Japan (since May 9, like all his colleagues, he acquired a new rank of ambassador), asked for a meeting with Matsuoka. The Japanese Foreign Ministry immediately reported that, although today is a holiday, the minister will receive Mr. Smetanin at half past four that same day. The reason was the ratification of the pact of April 13 by the Japanese government, with which the plenipotentiary congratulated the minister and his deputy Ohashi.

Matsuoka responded in the same spirit and immediately asked if the guest had any information about the ratification of the pact by the Presidium of the Supreme Council?

"Not yet," Smetanin replied, and Matsuoka asked somewhat nervously, "As soon as

she arrives, please inform me immediately or vice minister.

Then Matsuoka enthusiastically spoke about his Moscow and Leningrad impressions, about Stalin and Molotov, and said:

- I am delighted with the new life in the Soviet Union ... We have lied a lot about you ... But now I have a completely different idea of \u200b\u200bthe actual situation and intend to refute all fabrications on this score ... But I beg you to inform me immediately about ratification ...

And then Smetanin was pestered by calls from the Japanese Foreign Ministry all evening. News from Moscow reached the Tokyo embassy only at 9 pm. Calling the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Smetanin delighted the longing Japanese, and although the plenipotentiary was going to take the official notice there himself, the head of the Russian sector, Narita, immediately rushed to get the long-awaited paper, explaining the haste by the fact that Japanese newspapers were delayed due to the failure to receive a Russian answer about ratification.

Four days later, a military parade was held in Tokyo on the occasion of the birthday of the head of Japanese "moral communism" tenno Hirohito. The emperor turned forty years old - the date is round. However, there was not a single senior ambassador at the parade, starting with the doyen, an American. The Englishman and the Frenchman were also absent, but the German ambassador, General Ott, stood in the first place. The second was Smetanin, the third was an Italian... But most of all, our plenipotentiary spoke with the Thai prince Varvaran, whose younger brother, as it turned out, graduated from the medical faculty of St. Petersburg University and knew Russian well.

— How are your affairs on the border with French Indochina? Smetanin asked a question, and Varvaran immediately responded:

- Thank you! So far so good, but there are reasons for anxiety... We are ready to fight," he added. - And what worries you? "You see, two forces are now confronting Indochina... The military and officials support the Vichy government, while the merchants and financiers are behind General de Gaulle. And the influence of this second group is very strong in Saigon ... - Now in many countries there are two groups, - said Smetanin. - Here the local newspapers write about two groups in Japan: about reformists and supporters of the status quo ... Who, in your opinion, is stronger? "Probably the status quo group," he answered after thinking.

Barbarian. - This group does more, and the first one makes more noise ...

Both the Russian ambassador and the Thai prince were right. In Japan, for all the diversity of its political appearance, two main groups really fought, two views on the future of the country, Asia and the world.

Island Japan entered the general life of the planet late - it isolated itself for centuries. But over the centuries it has accumulated a lot of energy and therefore was able to quickly bypass huge China ... It helped Japan at first, oddly enough, and its raw material poverty. Unlike China, it was not of particular interest to the white colonialists. There was another circumstance that ensured Japan's

"favor" of the West. It turned out that it was convenient for Japan to be made the leading Asian power hostile to Russia in the Far East and the Pacific. And the Anglo-Saxons encouraged the all-round development of Japan in the expectation that all this would turn against Russia. On the loans of the Yankees (more precisely, American Jewish bankers such as Jacob Schiff from the Kuhn, Loeb and Co. house) and the English shipyards, the Tsushima Japanese fleet was built, and the Anglo-Japanese alliance became the political base of the Russo-Japanese war

at the beginning of the century.

Actually, the very "conservative Meiji revolution" of the autumn of 1867, which created a new post-reform Japan, could be directly connected with another event of 1867 - the criminal

the sale of Russian America by the palace camarilla that controlled Alexander II and his brother, Grand Duke Constantine. By depriving Russia of her Pacific bastion - Alaska, Aleut, the islands in the northwestern part of the Pacific Ocean, it was possible to push Japan forward without fear that even the Russian tsars would be disturbed by her breakthrough and they would be forced to pay more attention to the Pacific Ocean, and therefore to Russian America. After Russia's loss of her American possessions, Western advances and curtsies to Japan increased.

But in Japan there have always been influential forces who understood the advantage for the country of an alliance not with the West, but with Russia. The names of Prince Ito, Tokyo Mayor Count Goto are the most famous, but they were not alone among the Japanese elite. The Russo-Japanese War prevented a possible rapprochement - as it was intended by the Anglo-Saxons ... But by the 41st year, two main groups too

One, connected with the army elite, with the generals of the Kwantung Army stationed in the puppet Manchukuo, dreamed of "crossing swords with Russia in the fields of Northern Manchuria." The other was prone to maritime expansion in the Pacific, which meant conflict with both Anglo-Saxon powers. This group, connected with the fleet, objected to the war with the USSR. Opposed to her and Admiral Yamamoto Isoroku, and such diplomats as Hirota and Togo, who knew the USSR through diplomatic service in Moscow. Alas, not everything turned out to be simple here either ... Prince Konoe was considered a "Eurasian" and as such shared the ideas of the German geopolitician General Karl Haushofer. The German knew Japan well, had once served as a military attache in Tokyo, and now maintained contact with Konoe through his student, the Frankfurter Zeitung Tokyo correspondent Richard Sorge. Haushofer's dominant idea was the "continental bloc" of Germany, Russia and Japan. But the conclusion of the Tripartite Pact worried precisely the Eurasianists-pragmatists in Tokyo. They believed that a military alliance with Germany could lead in the future to a war on three fronts - with the USSR, with China and with the USA. But that was not all. The most militant and hardline leader

of the army circles, General Tojo Hideki, nicknamed Razor, stood for an expansionist policy of the most chauvinistic type.

He did not consider non-Japanese as people at all, and even more so his Asian neighbors! The general divided all countries of the world into relative and absolute enemies. Russia belonged to the latter, but Tojo was ready to fight immediately with America - for hegemony in the Pacific, for China, for the Philippines and the Dutch Indies (Indonesia). For India itself, he, too, however, was not averse to fighting. He was not afraid of conflict with England, with France. Moreover, Tojo did not want Asia for Asians. He desired Asia for Japan, striving for the maximum colonial exploitation of the former in the name of the prosperity of the latter. He was also for not just a tough, but for a cruel line in relations with China, for its complete occupation. However, although Tojo was an extremist, he was not a fool and knew how to think realistically - if he was forced to do so by real circumstances.

The Konoe group was inclined to ensure "coexistence and co-prosperity" in Asia - under the leadership of Japan. For Tojo, there was no question of any "co...". In any case, for now. Indeed, as an oppositionist, he could afford to be more harsh in words than if he were prime minister. True, Tojo was ready to cooperate with Germany and welcomed the Tripartite Pact.

Fifty-year-old Prince Fumimaro Konoe was nicknamed "the melancholic prince" by the Japanese who are prone to nicknames (however, what people are not inclined to them if the nickname itself asks for language?). Tall, fragile, refined appearance, the prince could sometimes really fall into depression and did not always pay attention to the little things in life. But he knew how to see the main thing, and even at the age of nineteen, after graduating from the Faculty of Law of Kyoto University, he published a political essay under the indicative title "Refusal of the World with England and America in the Center." Growing up, he

put forward the idea of a "sphere of prosperity of Greater East Asia". And, unlike Tojo, Konoe saw the task not in replacing the Anglo-Saxons as colonizers with the Japanese, but - as already mentioned - in creating a bloc of three leading anti-Anglo-Saxon powers. In Asia, Konoe was inclined towards a policy of reasonable Japanese patronage - including in China.

On November 30, 1940, Konoe signed the Treaty on the Basis of Relations between Japan and the Republic of China. Is it true,

the very concept of the "Republic of China" could then be understood in different ways. There was the Yan'an region - the "Special Region of China" under the control of the communist (rather, however, a left-wing nationalist) Mao Zedong.

There was a government of Chiang Kai-shek in the southern Chinese Chongqing. This one flirted with us, and with the Yankees, and with the Japanese, with whom officially fought.

There was also the Central "national" government of Wang Jingwei, chairman of the Central Political Council of the Kuomintang in 1937-1938. Wang Jingwei broke up with Chiang Kai-shek, being a supporter of cooperation with Tokyo. In December 1938, he fled Chongqing to Japanese-occupied Shanghai, and in March 1940 he formed his own government in Nanjing... It was with him that Konoe signed his treaty. Konoe was in favor of **reasonable** patronage - it was not for nothing that

the Tokyo envoy of such a proud (albeit very poor) country as Afghanistan informed our Smetanin in April 41 that an Afghan economic mission had arrived in Japan to get acquainted with the industrial capabilities of the country and expand export-import operations with the Japanese.

The Konoe group was also in favor of extensive state control - and not only over the economy. In 1940, a new political structure was introduced - numerous bourgeois and right-wing socialist parties dissolved themselves, and all this parliamentary rubbish was replaced by the Throne Relief Association. New state bodies were created - control associations for all types of production. It was something like the Industries Organization in the Reich, with its six imperial groups for industry, energy, banking, commerce, crafts and insurance. It was also reminiscent of the corporate principle of the Duce.

Control associations regulated the supply of the Japanese economy with raw materials and fuel, labor, set prices and determined economic policy. They were led by people from the "zaibatsu" - the largest concerns. The Zaibatsu was full of both political realists and political extremists. But, one way or another, it was just the strengthening of the state that Stalin and Matsuoka spoke about in Moscow.

On May 8, 1941, Smetanin arranged a dinner at the embassy for fishermen, oil workers and coal miners from the Japanese-Soviet society. There was also one of the former Japanese ambassadors to the USSR, Ota. The invited Tanaka could not be, but three hours before dinner he personally conveyed to the first secretary Dolbin that unexpected circumstances forced him to be elsewhere. Industrialists

Sakonji, Tanakamaru, Mitsui, Otani, Ambassador Ota were sitting at the table ... Everyone was animated, they talked a lot, but political topics were not touched upon. "Gentlemen," said the

plenipotentiary (without one day - already an ambassador), "a week and a half ago, my comrades and I were invited by the director of the theater association, Mr. Otani, to the Kabuki Theater ... There were also gentlemen Ohashi and Kiuchi with their wives.

Ohashi was Matsuoka's deputy, and Kiuchi was the head of the Foreign Ministry's protocol department. -

And what are your impressions? Ota asked. - We saw only a part of the program, because, in addition to the performance, we were also treated to dinner ... Everyone

laughed together. The plenipotentiary laughed, and then seriously finished:

- Such acts are very interesting for the knowledge of ethnography, culture and life of old Japan ...

Everyone nodded their heads, and the wife of the embassy adviser, Yakov Malika, added: "Mr.

Ohashi told us that Mr. Otani owns sixty theaters and more than a hundred cinemas ...

One of the guests nodded affirmatively, and Smetanin said: "Mr.

Otani has hinted to me for the second time about the possibility of a Kabuki tour in Moscow. How was

it in 1928? Ota showed a good memory. - Yes ... - Then it was a breakthrough!

- Well, well ... Enough time has passed for new breakthroughs, gentlemen!



But all this was still "lyrics". But the bottom line was that one part of the Japanese leadership was in favor of an immediate war with Russia, and the other part was in favor of an equally immediate war with America and England. The Yankees understood this very well. And they were satisfied with one option - the first. At the same time, America also needed a war between the USSR and the Reich - so far, at least on the pages of newspapers. And one fine day in early May, the Japanese agency Domei Tsushin transmitted from New York a "sensational news":

“According to a telegram from a United Press correspondent from Riga, the Soviet Union is concentrating large military forces on its western borders. Diplomatic circles in Moscow say that the concentration of troops is carried out on an extremely large scale. In this regard, passenger traffic on the Siberian railway was stopped, since troops from the Far East are being transferred mainly to the western borders. Large military forces are also transferred there from Central Asia. Of the two reserve air armies directly at the disposal of the Supreme Command, one army has already been placed at the disposal of the Kyiv Special Military District. It consists of 1,800 bombers and 900 fighters. In the Black and Caspian Seas, the naval fleets have been strengthened at the expense of warships of the Baltic Fleet. Transferred 28 submarines, 45 destroyers and 18 gunboats. A military mission led by Kuznetsov left Moscow for Tehran. The purpose of the mission is related to the issue of providing the Soviet Union with airfields in the central and western parts of Iran.

On May 9, 1941, TASS refuted this “Tokyo-style duck” and reported that “a grain of truth” was that, due to better housing conditions, one rifle division was being transferred from near Irkutsk to Novosibirsk.

But the Japanese "duck" also had its own truth, and this is what it was: not everyone in Japan liked the new trends. After all, Domei Tsushin (translated as "Union of Telegraph Agencies") was not a second-rate agency, but an official monopoly on the dissemination of foreign information in the country, associated with four hundred central and provincial newspapers. It had 70 branches in Japan and correspondents in New York, London, Paris, Berlin, Rome, Moscow, Buenos Aires, as well as in many other metropolitan and non-capital cities. And his "disinformation" was eloquent and revealing.

Japan, like the rest of the world, was at a big crossroads. However, the Molotov-Matsuoka pact was now reinforced by the Moscow meeting and a new - already Quadruple - alliance ... And one could say that Japan began to turn into the color of Japanese cherry sakura, blooming with beautiful pink flowers. The birthplace of "moral communism" gradually "rose pink" politically. And in the future, everything depended on whose line - the "melancholy prince" Konoe or Razor Tojo - would become decisive in Japan.

* * *

EUROPE was immersed in apple blossoms - in white and in pink. And, starting in the Mediterranean Sea, the relay race of flowering and life flew over warm countries, reaching the Russian North. Negotiations between the "occupied" Denmark and the Soviet Union on the signing of an additional protocol to the Agreement on Trade and Payments between the USSR and Denmark in force since September 18, 1940 were ending in Moscow. The agreement was concluded after the cessation of hostilities in France, after the occupation of Denmark by Wehrmacht units! And this detail showed that, if not for the forces of Evil, the peoples of the Old World would already be able to peacefully build a new Europe for Europeans. "Occupied" in Churchill's speeches, Denmark, until April 30, 1942, was supposed to supply cranes, diesel engines, ship engines, equipment for cement plants to Russia and receive cotton, gas oil, kerosene, phosphates, chemicals, tobacco, timber in exchange ...

However, although there were no battles on the European continent now, there was no peace in Europe. And those who conceived, ignited and fanned the war, still worked in the name of its continuation. And even before the Fuhrer's trip to Moscow - April 9, 1941 - Churchill once again provoked Stalin from the rostrum of parliament:

- There are a number of signs that indicate the intention of the Nazis to try to seize the granaries of Ukraine and the oil fields of the Caucasus and thereby get at their disposal the resources in order to wear down the world that speaks English ...



And after all, what is interesting is that even provoking the Russians, Churchill could not suppress the Anglo-Saxon arrogance in himself! In his view, the granaries of Ukraine and the oil fields of the Caucasus mattered only insofar as they somehow influenced the fate of the "God's chosen" race - the Anglo-Saxons. On April 14, 1941, Deputy People's Commissar

Lozovsky was told about the same by the American ambassador Shteingard, "driven by ardent love for Mr. Lozovsky, Mr. Molotov and the USSR." "I spoke with one young Norwegian," the American shared "confidentially"

"information," and he says that Germany has exhausted all its reserves, food in the occupied countries has dried up and the only source of food remains is you ... But you can also stop supplies, and the Germans can take a new desperate step ...

Lozovsky listened in silence, and Shteingard, saying goodbye, "friendly" advised:

- Beware of Germany and its plans ... And read Mein Kampf more often. On April 16, 1941,

Eden was already in London processing Ambassador Ivan Maisky, after returning from a trip to the Middle East. The chief of the Foreign Office began with a thrilling account of how his Catilina nearly crashed into the Bay of Biscay. Then, already near Gibraltar, the pilot reported that there might not be enough fuel and might have to

sit on the sea. They still made it to the harbor of Gibraltar, but the fuel in the tanks of the flying boat remained for 10 minutes.

"Then the journey to Cairo went well," Eden finished. — And how did you find your position in the Middle East and North Africa? Maysky asked the question to the point.

- Oh, Mr. Maisky, the situation in Libya does not bother me much, although the Germans have reached the Egyptian border ... Moreover, I hope that our fleet will soon plug the "Sicilian hole" ... I think that hard days will soon come for the Germans in Libya ... I do not exclude our tactical retreat, but I am sure that Egypt is not in danger from the western desert. - What about the Turks? "The Turks are loyal friends of

Britain, but

one can hardly expect any activity from them now... If only you could help them with weapons..." Eden looked at Maisky expressively inquiringly, but he did not react to the remark, and Eden continued as if nothing had happened: — By the way, I spoke in Ankara with your colleague, Mr. Vinogradov, and with our Cripps, who specially flew to meet me from Moscow. And you know, Mr. Maisky, it seems to me that you have begun to treat Cripps better ...

"Ambassador, Mr. Eden, what a traveling salesman... If the goods are of good quality, then they treat them accordingly... And Cripps hardly has good goods for us..." Eden

grimaced and immediately began again:

"But Russia and England are threatened by the same "bad man"... Eden frightened us with the Germans, as they frighten naughty children with Baba Yaga, for in English fairy tales the "evil man" - "bad man" - carried approximately the same function. It must be said that, despite the successful answer about the lack of a "commodity" from Cripps (and such a commodity for the outside world could only be the world, which the Britons did not go for), Ivan Maisky defended the interests of the Motherland sluggishly - the established ties and habits acquired for many years of living in London. But then he couldn't resist:

- I can't agree with you, Mr. Eden, regarding the reasoning about the "bad man" ... I see no reason for the inevitable clash between the USSR and Germany!

What about the USSR and Japan? Eden did not lag behind. Are you really going to be friends? Doesn't your pact with her mean the end of aid to China?

And Maisky was again at his best: "Mr.

Eden!" One should not try to subtract more from the pact with Japan than is there. Recently, every major diplomatic action of the USSR is accompanied by a cloud of fantastic rumors, interpretations and discussions ... Time passes, the cloud dissipates, the dust settles and reality turns out to be different.

Maisky said this before the "Riga-New York" United Press provocation in early May, but there were enough such provocations in April. All "rumors" were not born by themselves! They were ordered, of course, by the Golden Elite of the World Evil. Eden, however, tried in vain—Maisky turned out to be more and more a figure of the second rank. More important was Dekanozov in Berlin, and most important of all, Hitler in Moscow, in an armchair by the fireplace in Stalin's dacha a week after Maisky's audience with Eden. And therefore, the hopes of the British for other provocations did not

come true either ... On May 8, 1941, Vyshinsky received the Yugoslav ambassador Gavrilovich and verbally conveyed to him a government message about the need to liquidate the embassy ... "There are no legal grounds for further activity in the USSR of the Yugoslav mission," it said. On the same day, a similar note verbale was received by the Belgian envoy "due to the fact that Belgium is not currently a sovereign state", as well as the representative of Norway.

Nothing has passed since the Fuhrer's visit to Moscow - some month, but the Anglo-Saxons' calculations for the Russian-German conflict were burned by the flames of oil fires in the Saudi fields, set on fire by the saboteurs Felmi and Grobba. And the situation in Libya and Egypt became more and more difficult not for the Germans, but

English.

The new Quadruple Pact was a superbomb for both London and Washington, but they still had hope that everything would be limited to an alliance on paper. You never know who and what when signed! Therefore, the Anglo-Saxon capitals did not resort to sharp demarches in relation to Moscow. Newspapers made noise, but in moderation - the "free" press was advised not to be zealous. The Golden Elite chose to wait and try to separate the Russians and Germans from each other.

Molotov overcame his "German" skepticism, and Stalin
At the beginning of the twentieth of May, I had a serious conversation with him:

- Vyacheslav, time begins to work for those who will
use them without delay.

Molotov did not answer, not knowing what the leader was getting at, but Stalin
explained:

"We seem to have taken the war away from our borders ... The
Germans are now fighting in Africa, but do you understand what it means
to accumulate a huge mass of troops and weapons and keep it inactive?
He cannot bring everything down on Africa and the Middle East - that means
hitting sparrows with a cannon ... We must

think about the future ... - And what follows from this?
said Molotov. - It follows that you should soon again
to go to Berlin and also to Rome.

And to

Rome? - Yes, and there ... Matsuoka got there out of nowhere in order
to work with new allies, and now Mussolini is also like an ally for us ... So
we need to get to know him and us. Just me or you too? Molotov
screwed up his eyes. - First - to you ... But here's the thing ...

When do we have fleet day this year? The All-Union Day of the Navy
of the

USSR was established by the decision of the Council of People's
Commissars and the Central Committee in 1939 and was celebrated on the
last Sunday of July.

Molotov looked at the calendar and said:
"July 27..."

- And you will be in Sevastopol? -

Will! I haven't been to the Black Sea for a long time... So ask "comrade" Ribbentrop and Mr. Ciano - I think they won't refuse you hospitality, and go. Stalin did not add anything, and Molotov thought that

the conversation was over, but Stalin suddenly looked intently, but somehow warmly at

him and said:

- And here's the thing, Molotstein... Do you understand how important all this is? You understand, Vyacheslav, we are not just winning an extra year of peace ... We are winning the future, because next year we will complete the third five-year plan and start the fourth. But the main thing is that it is already clear that we will fulfill the third! And after that we are invincible! And we will clamp down on this white bastard all over the world ... Hitler, of course, is not the best ally ... But there is no other! This one, it seems, is still worried about the people, the state, and not about his own pocket ... And look, he was also able to organize his people in a short time. And he leads him along ... There was a big communist party, and it was gone - they were washed away! No, Vyacheslav ... We can't build a new world with Roosevelt - for people, not for the bourgeoisie! .. Molotov was silent, and Stalin in an unusually kind voice

asked:

- A, Vyacha? You seem to be a bit depressed, but we have a lot of things to do ... Why

are you silent? Molotov was really silent, but if he could cry, he would cry now ... Stalin touched on something that had somehow blurred and faded over the years of the state routine. But they did not live for themselves - for the people. And what could be dearer to people than peace and labor? And what could be more hateful than

Peace and Labor to Golden Capital? Molotov looked at Stalin, and his eyes also

gradually grew warmer. And he answered: "Comrade Stalin!" Despondency happens, but it passes ...

Ready to work and do whatever the moment requires.

And UNDER the very end of May, Molotov went on a double visit: to Berlin and then to Rome.

Germany greeted him cordially - not like the first time. However, the season was different - spring, not autumn. This spring of 1941 in Munich, already the second edition (the first sold out quickly) was Karl Haushofer's book *The Continental Bloc. Central Europe - Eurasia - Japan*.

“From the heyday of the Victorian world empire,” ***Haushofer wrote at the beginning of the book***, “we hear the warning voice of the imperialist Homer Lee, author of the famous book on the affairs of the Anglo-Saxons. In this book, regarding the alleged rise of the British world empire, one can read that the day when Germany, Russia and Japan are united will be the day that determines the fate of the English-speaking power, the death of the gods.

Haushofer, who had long been close to the Fuhrer, pursued the same idea - in order to create a stable and just world order, the peoples of the world must oppose the policy of Anglo-Saxon (and, above all, American) hegemony. And it can only be counteracted with the combined efforts of the Reich, the USSR and the Land of the Rising sun ...

The book ended like this:

“1941, according to the Far Eastern zodiac sign, is the “year of the snake”; then 1942 - “the year of the horse”, which could again pull out to dry place much of what today still stands on shaky ground.

The general-geopolitician had views that were not just practical - now they could become a practical program of action. And such a program could be developed even without familiarity with Haushofer's book. Molotov had specific

instructions from Stalin - what should be said in Berlin and Rome. But his task was greatly facilitated by the fact that, while he was getting to Berlin, Roosevelt on May 27, 1941, held his next “fireside chat”. For the first time to this effective form

he resorted to radio appeals to the nation on March 12, 1933 - then the United States was bursting at the seams, and the smart part of the Golden Elite came to the conclusion that sometimes you have to treat the masses not as cattle, but as an equal to yourself, that is, to condescend to explanations.

Every politician must be able to make speeches. And Roosevelt and Churchill were, after all, outstanding politicians. And really something, but they knew how to pronounce speeches. It was all the easier for Roosevelt, because he only needed to read what the speechwriters from the group of Richard Gilbert palmed off, where John Galbraith and Griffith Johnson Jr. stood out in particular ... The last gloss was directed, however, by the "near" Jews - playwright Robert Sherwood and Samuel Rosenbaum .

This time, Roosevelt, in a thirty-minute "conversation", actually declared a state of emergency in the United States in all areas. The motivation was one thing - it is necessary to stop Adolf Hitler, who is rushing to world domination, and to defend democracy. Roosevelt mourned Europe, plunged into darkness, adding to the number of those shrouded in darkness also Denmark, which calmly entered into ordinary trade agreements with other countries. Roosevelt declared that America only needs a world in which freedom of speech

triumphs, where there is no place for want and terror, where the enemies of democracy are defeated: "members of the Bund, fascists, communists and all kinds of fanatics, adherents of religious and racial intolerance" ... And Roosevelt declared to the countries "axis" war not for life, but for death. So far, however, not officially, but in, so to speak, the moral aspect. But it was clear that the real entry into the war for Roosevelt was a settled matter.

Not a word was said about the possibility of peace in Europe.
Therefore, Molotov knew how to start a conversation with the Fuhrer.

- Mr. Hitler, do you know that Roosevelt on May 10, at a joint session of Congress, requested appropriations for the creation of an army of half a million? - Yes. Are you familiar with

Roosevelt's last speech? - Yes. — And do you know that

over the past year the US Army has received almost nine thousand aircraft, and they are going to produce up to fifty thousand a year?

Hitler listened to Molotov with a sullen look, but at the last digit he was thrown up: "Mr.

Molotov! This is a bluff! - No, its true. And there it is not particularly hidden. America is frank because it is rich... And it is rich because there are many poor people in the world.

Hitler frowned again:

"Herr Molotov!" During our conversations in Berlin last year, I already told you that the USA is pursuing a purely imperialist policy... That they are not fighting for England, but are trying to seize her inheritance... That they are helping England only insofar as they create armaments for themselves and try to win that place in the world the position they are striving for... I told you that the problem of counteracting America in its quest for violence against the freedom of peoples is not a problem in the 40th, not in the 45th, but in the 70th, 80th, in 2000- th year... Finally, I said that it is necessary that, in addition to Europe, Africa be considered as a European state, that we need a kind of Monroe Doctrine for Europe, as the Americans have... So why, Herr Molotov, are you telling me all this? - Then, that we agree with you ... Except for one ... - Namely? - This problem must be solved much

sooner - just in time for the year 45, in extreme cases - by the 47th ... And for this it is necessary to solve the problem of England in the 42nd year ...

Hitler and Ribbentrop listened to Stalin's envoy with an indescribable expression on their faces. They spent so much effort, energy and time to explain this obvious idea to the Russians, and suddenly the Russians themselves begin to rush them ... This ... That's

it ... It

was ... No,

it was simply impossible! Molotov, on the other hand, looked at his interlocutors as if nothing had happened. And Hitler, suddenly calming down,

energetically asked: - What do you propose specifically, Herr Molotov? Dig a tunnel under the English Channel? Hidden irritation nevertheless broke through in this matter. "Or can you help us with the fleet?" Almost a year ago I tried to concentrate all the forces of the Reich for the ope

"Sea Lion" ... But they just weren't enough! Yes, and now is not enough. I tell you this frankly, for we are now to a certain extent allies...

- Mr. Hitler, Comrade Stalin thinks so ... We are really allies, but at the moment our help is expressed not in military assistance, but in guarantees for you to conduct an active campaign against England where Napoleon wanted to hit her. Hitler did not answer, and Ribbentrop asked for him: "Do you mean Egypt, Herr Molotov?" -

And also Malta and Gibraltar ... In addition - the Levant, the Middle East and the Middle East ...

Germany has such a mass of troops in a mobilized state that you can carry out such operations without difficulty ... Hitler was silent. Molotov, clearly answering his doubts,

offered: -

We understand that in order to seriously get involved in such a large-scale campaign, requiring primarily aviation forces, you need to seriously weaken your border with us ... We are ready, as a guarantee, to expand as your troops are transferred to the South and South-East security zone from fifty to about a hundred kilometers. At the same time, we agree to the stationing of one or two of your tank divisions on our territory in some of its depths ... After all, you will not need the entire mass of tanks to march to the Nile ... - Will you go there with us? Mr Hitler! As Comrade Stalin told you, we are already strong

for a purely defensive war. We

have already ensured **our own**, " Molotov emphasized the word in a voice, "we have already provided external security... But in order to help you ensure **yours**, " he again emphasized the word in a voice, "we need another year. Even less... Time does not endure, but haste will not lead to good. - That is, in the forty-second year you are ready to declare war on England? And then Molotov fell silent. Hitler and Ribbentrop looked at him, waiting for an answer.

"Mr. Hitler," Molotov said suddenly, "but what if you take, so to speak, a vacation in order to get to know Russia better?" We are planning a wonderful summer, in the Crimea they promise cloudless, stable weather, a warm sea ... Hitler, hearing this, frankly, without restraint, laughed: -

Herr Molotov, you yourself perfectly understand that your offer is as tempting for me as it is impossible to fulfill. I am still under the impression of my first visit to Moscow - by the way, already my second Russian visit, if Brest is also counted. And almost immediately go to you again - even if unofficially? And is there a need for this? The Fuhrer shook his head doubtfully: "Perhaps Herr Stalin himself would have come here?" We would accept him with all the honors he deserves. And I have so many things to do in the Reich...

My permanent presence here is absolutely necessary. You are happy people... You have peaceful problems, but we have a war. After all, you won't win it for us. And they intend to win with us only in the future ... And do they intend to?



The question was asked directly, and the Reich Chancellor wanted to Russian response to it. Molotov didn't answer. Hitler was waiting.

Sometimes silence is meaningful, sometimes contemptuous, sometimes stupid. Molotov's silence was silent, and nothing more. Hitler himself possessed, if necessary, large reserves of endurance and therefore could not help but admire the interlocutor, whose endurance seemed to be inexhaustible - without any definite reserve. Hitler suddenly had an unexpected thought: "Maybe ask him to give me a couple of lessons in silence?"

The pause hung so that a little more - and she could bring down the whole conversation, but then Molotov slightly moved in his chair, as if erasing the silence with this slight movement, and - without a direct connection with the question, as always calmly answered:

“Herr Reich Chancellor, we treat your problems with full understanding... However,” and here a sly light suddenly lit up in the monolithic Molotov’s eyes, “we are now establishing good and even trusting relations. Their volume is growing, and the depth may also be growing.” Molotov again paused significantly and continued: “I have already said that this summer Moscow will have excellent, stable weather, and you could not only hold

some informal negotiations, but also take a little rest away from the usual environment. I have a personal letter from Comrade Stalin on this subject for you.

OPENING the package handed over to him by Molotov, before starting on the German text, Hitler carefully peered at the handwritten original. It was the first time he held Stalin's autograph in his hands. The handwriting was large, legible, confident and sweeping at the same time. The Fuhrer involuntarily lingered on the text, trying to catch the general tone from the visual impression. The letter gave birth to trust, and Hitler looked at the typewritten translation:

“... During our Moscow meeting,” ***Stalin wrote***, “we talked about how useful it would be for you to get to know our country more closely. The current period is characterized by a certain lull. At the same time, Soviet-German relations are assuming ever greater scope, and we could diversify them considerably. I am fully aware that I owe you, Herr Reich Chancellor, a return

visit, but I will definitely repay this debt. However, in this situation, I believe that it is in our common interest to postpone this for a while. Nevertheless, Vyacheslav Molotov and I very much hope that you will be able to find time for our new personal talks. Summer time also provides an excellent opportunity to get to know Leningrad and its

architectural ensembles - which, it seems to me, would be especially interesting for you. Vyacheslav Molotov has the authority to discuss everything specific details if your consent is obtained..."

Hitler looked at the date under the signature and thought. It seems that the Russians invited him to a new tour, and the fact that this personal message from Stalin came just a month after their meeting said that there could be something serious here ... The sly gleam of eyes unusual for Molotov was also worth something. Himself a subtle psychologist and actor, Hitler was able to notice and appreciate the nuances. And then he saw that Molotov was not playing, but deliberately allowed himself to relax a little and slightly open the visor of impenetrable restraint. Molotov looked friendly, and suddenly a simple thought occurred to Hitler. Molotov and Stalin want to make it clear to him that they are

interested in him not only as the leader of the new Germany, but also as a person. That they are ready to go far in their partnership. He recalled the enthusiastic reaction of Ribbentrop, who returned from Moscow at the end of August 1939 after the conclusion of the Pact. Ribbentrop then sincerely admired the simplicity and cordiality of the atmosphere in the Stalinist environment. He also remembered his impressions - Brest, Moscow ... And Hitler, just looking Molotov straight in the eyes, said: - Danke ... I will come to Russia again. Despite the fact that this was said in German, Molotov understood

and briefly answered in German: - Gut.



The next day, Molotov was already in Rome ... Duce, pouting with pride that he was not forgotten, behaved very kindly. And when he found out that he was offered a meeting with Stalin at the celebration of the Russian fleet, he immediately inquired: - I would like to arrive in Sevastopol on a friendship visit

on a ship worthy of such an event ... Let's say, on a battleship

"Littorio" ... And

the Duce carefully looked at the Moscow guest. He withstood this look and simply replied: - We will be glad to welcome the Italian sailors in the capital of the Soviet fleet, just like you, Mr. Mussolini, and you, Mr. Ciano, - he bowed towards the Duce's son-in-law, - if,

Certainly...

- If? .. - If, of course, it is possible to agree with Turkey on the passage of the Littorio through the Straits ... The Duce thought about it, but immediately perked up and said:
- We still have time, Signor Molotov ... And now it works, as I appears to be our Fourth Alliance. So we will try to negotiate with the Turks. Together... Do you agree?
And Molotov answered: - Quite!

Chapter 11. Hermann Goering and Mikhail Gromov

Even before Stalin again sent Molotov to Berlin, he decided that it was time to deal with not only the most important problems, but simply important ones. Stalin always tried to look at things from different points of view, from different levels of responsibility. Not belonging to those who impudently perceive themselves as the master of life already by birthright, he became the master of the great life of a great power by the right of genius and by the right of enormous labor. But that's why Stalin knew what it was - trifles. "Some people think that ordinary people are just cogs..." he said. "But we are all worthless without them!" Some "cog" will go wrong - and it's over ... Because the whole state organism rests on them ... "So, there are no trifles in a big deal. But if "cogs" are also important, then how

should one evaluate those who are far from being "cogs"? Thinking about this, Stalin came to the conclusion: the new situation requires a new account of other figures in the Reich, except for the Fuhrer and Ribbentrop. Now, after the Fuhrer's visit to Moscow, the figures of the second row had to be looked at seriously. Some of them were known in the USSR only from the cartoons of Boris Efimov-Fridlyand in Izvestia, and some were generally in the shadows, not even honored with cartoons.

Shortly after the Fuhrer's departure, Stalin had a funny conversation between the owner of the office and Budyonny in

Stalin's office: "Hitler ... Goering ... Hess ... Goebbels ... Himmler ... Heydrich ... Well, the company got close - a solid "ge ...", Budyonny, who belonged to the new course, dejectedly told Stalin skeptically.

"You, Semyon, are not quite right," Stalin objected. He, as always, made inquiries a long time ago, not missing the little things, and now patiently explained to

Budyonny: - In our opinion, they are all on the same "ge ...", but in fact, in German, on "G" there are only two - Goering and Goebbels ... They are written like

that on "G" ... Stalin took a sheet of paper, wrote "Goring", "Goebbels" and showed it to Budyonny.

- Well, yes! And the rest? - Semyon Mikhailovich did not believe. - And the rest - on

"ha ..." And on a piece of paper was added: "Hitler", "Hess", "Himmler",

"Heydrich". It would be more correct to call them like that," Stalin added and listed, exhaling the initial "ha": "Hitler, Hess, Himmler, Heydrich..."

- So, they are not "ge ...", but good ...

And Budyonny proposed an option with

"x ...". Stalin laughed, and that was the end of the "discussion". But the conversation was remembered, and Stalin mentally returned to it more than once.

In 1941, Stalin was in his sixty-second year. Hitler, born in 1889, was exactly ten years younger. And the rest of the famous political figures of the Reich? Goering - since 1893. Hess

Goering is a year

younger - since 1894. Himmler and

Goebbels were the weather - from 1900 and 1901. Heydrich, in the 41st year, did not even reach forty - he was born in 1904.

So, everything is completely young, if you look, people. Is it possible that he, "Comrade Stalin", will not be able to beat them? Replay not as a sharpie, not as a trickster, but as an experienced, wise politician with a planetary scale of thought and deed? Hitler was also an outstanding figure, he knew how to look far, but even Hitler took the position of a junior in relation to him. Nevertheless, Stalin, the head of the party and state, would have personal contact only with Hitler himself. Well, with Ribbentrop... And what about the others? The level of, say, Himmler is the level of our Beria. Will Lavrenty

Himmler master it? Or Heydrich? Stalin peered

at the photo from the dossier lying on his desk - into the inexpressive eyes of the Reichsfuehrer SS Himmler, hidden from immodest curiosity. In the hard, glassy gaze of Heydrich ... And he thought. How to take into account

them - the second, third, fifth, seventh figure of the Reich? The first ten of them? First hundred? After all, they also have

meaning and influence...

Hess - Deputy Fuhrer for the party. Something like Zhdanov we have. Well, making contacts along this line is something you need to think about ten times. Although it is necessary to think here too ... Here Goebbels ... What an anti-communist he was, he debated with Dimitrov at the Leipzig trial, and debated intelligently! - and now on the front page of Izvestia there is not a caricature of him, but a photo surrounded by Tomsk pioneers ... The idea of \u200b\u200bdirect acquaintance of the Reich Minister of Propaganda with Russia turned out to be quite successful. However, Goebbels is, in a big way, a talker. More important are practical people. And in addition to Goebbels, it is necessary to approach others in a new way.

Let's say, to Goering ...

Having received the unique rank of Reichsmarschall for the French campaign of 1940, only he was assigned, ace of the First World War Hermann Goering stood in a special relationship to the Fuhrer. Göring's fantasy and his strong personality often drew Hitler into the world of thinking on a super-large scale. Goering knew how to deftly use his influence, and he succeeded in a lot with Hitler. The Fuhrer often called fat Herman a great German, and this is something in the mouth of the Fuhrer meant.

Ribbentrop confessed confidingly:

“I have never been able to get close to the Fuhrer and have not seen anyone else who could do it. The exception is Goering ... Sometimes it seems to me that the Fuhrer has some fear of Goering. Once he told me after one conversation: “For God's sake, Ribbentrop, do not irritate the Reichsmarschall, otherwise he will show us one more day ...” ”

On the other hand, Goering's attitude towards Russia as a potential partner of Germany was ambiguous. Stalin was reported that Goering was "burdened with anti-Bolshevism" to a lesser extent than many others. And it was true. Goering often used the most energetic vocabulary when talking about the USSR, but in reality he was much more subtle and far-sighted. Even before Brest, he once said to General Josef Kammhuber, commander of the 1st Night Fighter Division:

- You know, Kammhuber, they start talking about the possibility of war with Russia ... Kammhuber,

his peer, also a participant in the First World War, but - in the infantry, shrugged. This did not concern him personally, because he commanded night aviation in Holland. "But we are already at war

with England, and we have a pact with Russia," he calmly objected. "Yes," the Reichsmarshal

confirmed irritably, "but this is today ..." And Goering continued: "So, Kammhuber, I don't want this war!" I'm against her! In my opinion, this is the worst thing we could do... It will be an economic mistake, a political mistake and a military mistake.



Stalin did not know about this conversation, but he knew that Goering was an influential and trusted person, and in recent years he had repeatedly emphasized his loyalty to Russia. And Stalin wondered - who could be Goering's partner from our side? There was no direct analogue both in terms of status and psychology. Moreover, Goering was immediately united in many hypostases.

Ace-hero, awarded the order "Pour le Merite" ("For Merit") and personally shot down 22 aircraft ... Pilot, commander of the most elite unit of German aviation. in the First World War - the 1st squadron "Richthofen". Listed by the French in the number of war criminals of the First World War. And now - the Reich Minister of Aviation and Commander-in-Chief of the Air Force, the Luftwaffe.

But Goering is one of the creators of the SA, the paramilitary assault squads of the NSDAP. Member of the "Beer putsch" of the 23rd year ... Then he walked next to Hitler and was seriously wounded in the thigh by two bullets. And he is also a

politician, chairman of the Reichstag, prime minister and policeman president of Prussia, Dimitrov's opponent at the Leipzig trial of 1933 in the case of the Reichstag arson. And to that: the party's expert on

technical issues, who has established close ties with industrialists; imperial commissioner for 4-

summer plan; chairman of the huge state superconcern "Hermann Goering Werke", formed in 1937 after the confiscation of property from Jews and including factories in the occupied territories ... However, this is not all! Goering - and the Chief Forester of

the Reich. At the same time - a sybarite, a collector who loves luxury and spectacular costumes and declares; "Still, I'm a Renaissance type." But Goering also knows how to control himself, and, if necessary, knows how to limit himself.

Personally, he is polite, insightful, resourceful and brilliant with a sharp mind, with great self-control and an excellent memory, an excellent orator. By origin - the son of a major official of the German consular service (but not from titled ones) and the daughter of wealthy farmers. At the same time, he was the godson of Ritter von Epenstein, who, although he had the aristocratic prefix "von" and was a Catholic, had the dubious honor of being on the "semi-Gotha" list, that is, among titled German surnames of Jewish origin.

And, finally, Goering is a morphine addict, a drug addict. But, again, there is a "but" here too ... He became addicted to morphine not because of natural inclinations and not because of weakness of character, but because of a twist of fate. After two bullets received during the putsch of 23, he was illegally taken to Austria by his devoted and beloved wife Karin for treatment. There he was ill for a long time, and in order to save the patient from severe pain, he was given morphine for a long time. As a result, having got rid of one disease, Goering

acquired another. So, the personality is colorful, sometimes impulsive, however, strong-willed... The bouquet of qualities is still the same.

Stalin pondered... What hypostasis of the Reichsmarschall to use? Obviously the most important for us. And the most important was, perhaps, the peaceful, creative side of his nature - economic and industrial.

In 1933-1936, the first four-year plan for the development of the German economy was carried out, and in September 1936, at the Nuremberg Congress of the NSDAP, Hitler proclaimed the second German "four-year plan". Hermann Goering became the commissioner for the four-year plan. The projects included the creation of new grades of steel and

rental, enterprises for the production of synthetic gasoline and the automotive construction of strategic highways industry, and the creation of strategic

stocks.

These were things that were necessary both for peace and for war. And all this happened against the backdrop of the strengthening of the state sector of the economy. Even in Weimar Germany, large state industrial associations were formed: Preag, Fiag, Prouzag, Zeksische Werke. Under Hitler, the share of state property began to grow rapidly. In March 1936, the Imperial Statistical Office reported that there were 1,085 public enterprises in the country, of which: 61 were property of the empire, 57 were lands, 25 were Hanseatic cities, 291 were communes and associations of communities, 142 were joint empire and lands, and 509 were jointly empire and communities. A substantial addition to public property was given by "Aryanization", that is, the confiscation of the enterprises and

capitals of the Jews. Of course, it had a racial connotation, but from the point of view of social justice, it was a reasonable and socially justified act. However, the German industrialists, who did not get along with the new government, also lost their property.

At the same time, the largest state concern "Reichswerke A. G. für Erzbergbau und Eisenhütten Hermann Goering" arose in Germany. Goering gave this joint-stock company for the extraction of iron ore and the production of pig iron only his name, but the capital - although not of his own free will - was given by Jewish financiers and German industrialists. After Thyssen fled Germany, the complex of enterprises controlled by Thyssen from the Vereinigte Stalwerke also entered Hermann Göring. How did the magnates react here? With great displeasure. The appearance of the

state superconcern worried the "kings" of the Ruhr more than any other measures to regulate the economy. The private monopolies resisted so viciously that Goering

stated:

- Individuals and firms that interfere with the efficient operation of the concern will be considered as saboteurs!